

LABOUR

LOOKS

AT

ISRAEL

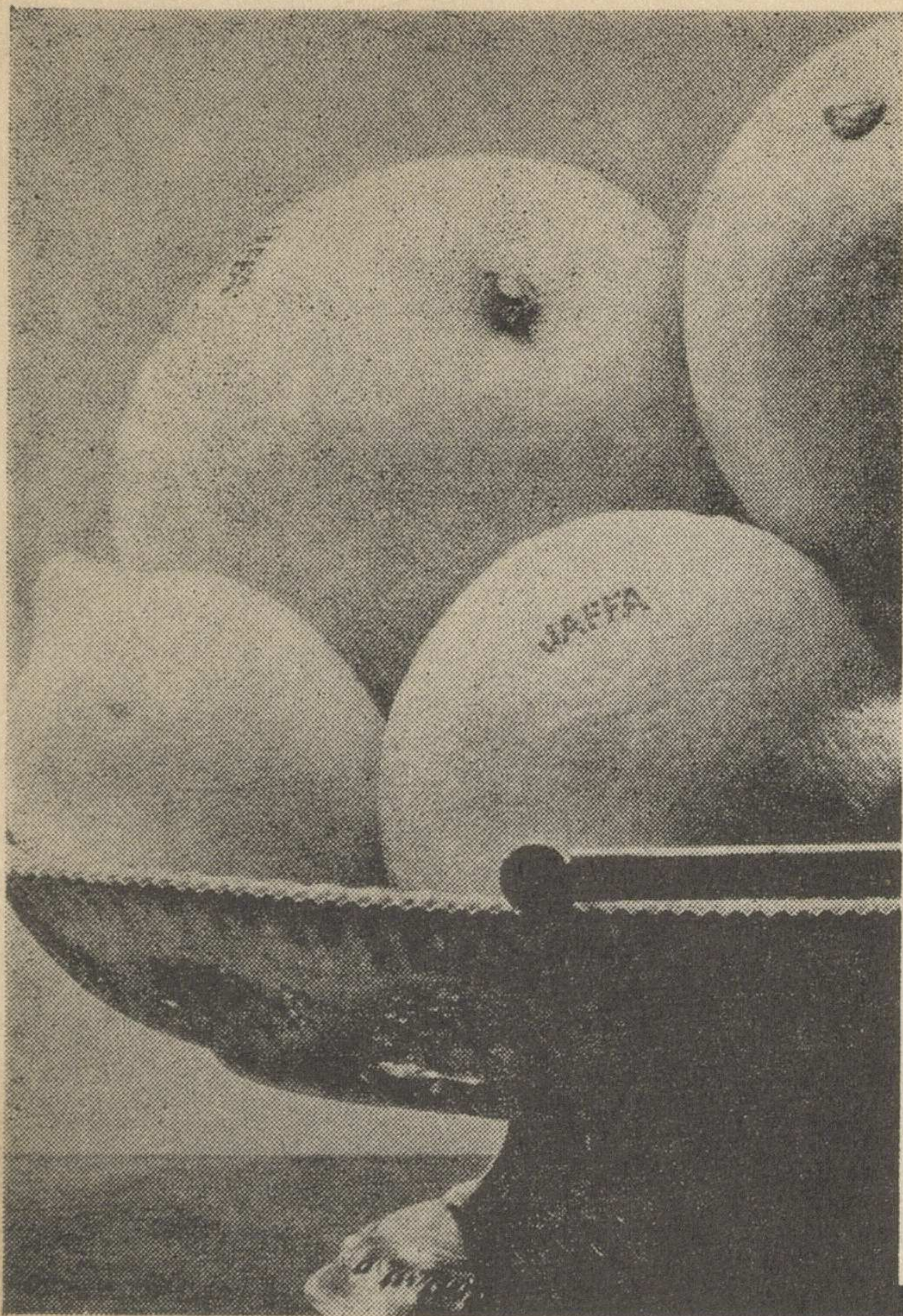


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LABOUR LOOKS AT ISRAEL

1967-1971

Price 30p.

Edited by Sidney Goldberg

Published in September 1971 by

Labour Friends of Israel

62 Charles Lane, St John's Wood, London NW8 7SP

Tel. 01-586-4433/4

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INTRODUCTION

Labour Friends of Israel since 1966 have organised Study Missions to Israel. Over 150 people have visited Israel by this method coming from all parts of Britain, and all were members of Trade Unions, Constituency Labour Parties, the Co-operative Movement, and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

During these visits members of the mission met both the average man and woman in town and country besides the leaders of Israel's Labour Government.

In the following pages you will find articles giving impressions of some of the members of the missions. There is also the report of an interview with Mrs. Golda Meir, Israel's Labour Prime Minister. The story is told of a country, the only democracy in the region, a country that has a very high degree of public ownership, a strong Co-operative Movement, a Labour led Government, a strong Trade Union organisation embracing nearly all the workers, and a country which is proud of its Socialist democracy. There are few Social democracies in the world today, and Israel must be of interest to all members of the British Labour Party.

"WE WENT INTO ISRAEL AS THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATES"

By ERIC S. HEFFER, M.P.

WE went to Israel determined to get at the truth. My colleagues and I acted as "devil's advocates", asking all the awkward questions, and demanding to see everything possible within the time available. Contrary to Ian Gilmour and Dennis Walters, who seem to have accepted the assessment of the Amman official, that the Israelis talk peace but not justice, I believe on the basis of what we saw and heard: the Israelis not only want peace with the Arabs, but equally want justice for the Arabs.

I would not quarrel with what Mr. Gilmour and Mr. Walters saw, but I do feel that they have too easily accepted what they were told. It is clear that they draw no dividing line between what they observed and what they heard at second hand. It would be interesting to know if, in fact, they saw the 10 villages described as being destroyed.

We spoke to members of the Israeli Cabinet, leaders of the Labour parties and trade unions, Arab politicians in Israel and prisoners of war in the Gaza Strip. We spent some time with the British ambassador and also talked to a U.N. officer in Kuneitra in occupied Syria as well as military leaders.

Trade concern

In Jerusalem we walked through the Old City (before the physical barriers were removed with the new city) without an armed guard, mingling freely with the Arab population. The main concern seemed to be trade, and despite an embargo by Israeli authorities that no Israeli was to purchase goods from local traders, in fact, some trading was going on.

We, too, saw where Arab houses had been removed in front of the Wailing Wall. However, in addition, on our way through the narrow streets, markets and bazaars we also saw the synagogues whose desecration had been carried through with the authority of the Jordanian Government. The Israelis have given a pledge that the Holy places, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, will be open for all. Although the war ended only a few days before our arrival it was difficult to believe that it had taken place, because the atmosphere was so relaxed.

This was true also of Bethlehem. The Allenby Bridge, however, brought out in sharp relief the realities of the war. We saw the last trickle of the day's refugees, brought in Israeli trucks, actually crossing. On the other side Jordanian lorries were collecting the people with their pitiful belongings. It was a painful, tragic sight.

Did the Israelis force the refugees to leave? I am convinced that some individual Israeli soldiers might have exceeded their orders and some pressure in individual cases was actually used. Not that we saw signs of this or had any real evidence, but war is war, and Israelis claim no angelic status.

I am convinced that it has not been the declared policy of the Israeli Government to force the refugees to leave. They have left

and are leaving for many reasons, some explained by Mr. Gilmour and Mr. Walters. Not the least is the Arab propaganda which over the years called for the physical destruction of the Jews. The refugees were in control, the past threats to exterminate the Jews would rebound and extermination would be their own fate.

In the Gaza Strip we visited a refugee camp. This was the only time we had an armed escort. The refugees had no work and had been in this plight for 19 years. They lived on U.N.R.W.A. aid, and to that extent were slightly better off than the peasants in the Arab villages in the Gaza Strip through which we had passed. The atmosphere was tense. It was clear that over the years the people had been indoctrinated with anti-Israeli hate propaganda. There had been no attempt to integrate the refugees into the local community. British and United States aid to U.N.R.W.A., we felt, could have been better used.

In Israel proper we saw the remains of one camp set up temporarily to house immigrant Jews from Arab countries. The contrast between the Arab camps and the Jewish settlements was startling. The Jews now live in modern apartments with factories close by, giving them a dignity and purpose in life. The Israelis say they are willing to assist in solving the Arab refugees' problem, pointing out that because of their own resettlement projects, they have the technical know-how to do so.

At the Gaza town of Khan Yunis, at a girl's school (then the temporary headquarters of the Israeli Army), we saw a collection of 35 paintings, mainly by children between 12 and 14. These pictures were horrifying. They depicted Jews as past Nazi propaganda had shown them. It was clear they were the product of long years of hate teaching.

We saw the destruction of schools and other buildings at a kibbutz. The deep shelters which were used by children during the frequent bombardments were vivid reminders to us of the Second World War.

Political struggle

Contrary to opinion in Britain, General Dayan is not always speaking for the whole of the Israeli Government. The Israeli Government is a coalition, stretching from the left-wing Socialist Party, Mapam (which has Arab M.P.s) to the right-wing group led by Mr. Menachim Beigin. I heard it said by an Israel Cabinet Minister that he would be very happy to see the present coalition (formed as a result of the national crisis) come to an end soon. Clearly, a political struggle of importance is presently taking place.

Having gained the territories by a lightning victory, Israel is concerned about their future. The ideas about this are as numerous as the inhabitants of the country. They range from a straight handing back (using them as a bargaining factor to get direct talks between the Israelis and the Arab leaders), a confederation between Jordan and Israel, to a joint Arab-Jewish State. We found no hatred of the Arabs, only a desire to get a lasting settlement.

The most widespread feelings were of relief that the war had been short, of anxiety about the future, and a wish the war had never

happened. The problems created by the war are a heavy burden on the Israelis, which they could have done without.

DEGREE OF HATRED "HORRIFYING"

By PAUL ROSE, M.P.

A FEW days ago, with six Parliamentary colleagues, I stood in a schoolroom in Khan Unis in the Gaza strip. In the room were 30 or 40 pictures painted by the young girls from the school and their teachers.

I was horrified by the degree of hatred that must have been inculcated into these children by their teachers and the Egyptian authorities against the State of Israel. One of the pictures, painted by a teacher, was reminiscent of some of the worst propaganda of the Nazi period. It depicted grotesque caricatures of Israeli troops, and in particular of General Dayan, raping and murdering Arab women.

It was no surprise therefore that the atmosphere in the Gaza strip was tense and when we visited a refugee camp, we were guarded by a half-track and armoured soldiers. There has been much looting in the area from United Nations stores and for 20 years the Egyptians had kept refugees in camps under military government with a nightly curfew as a festering sore to be used as a political pawn in their propaganda against Israel.

By contrast, there was almost a holiday atmosphere in the old city of Jerusalem and in Bethlehem which were part of the west bank territory of Jordan. Here life, only a few weeks after the war, was virtually back to normal. I noticed the main object of most of the Arab people I spoke to was to sell their various wares to residents and tourists alike.

The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem was untouched by the war although *The Times*, quoting an Arab source in Amman, had reported it to be a heap of rubble. In fact the Israeli army sacrificed a large number of lives by refusing to use methods that might endanger any of the holy buildings, whether Moslem, Christian or Jewish.

My impression of the behaviour of the Israeli troops was that they were perhaps the most unmilitaristic military forces I had ever seen. There was no saluting or clicking of heels, and officers and men spoke in first name terms. The reservists wore a variety of hats and other clothing which, with the occasional beard, reminded me of Castro's Cuban guerillas.

On the other hand, the regulars in their red berets and camouflage uniforms looked the part, but undoubtedly this "people's army" must be one of the most effective military forces in the world.

It was significant that nearly half their casualties in the war were officers and NCOs who exposed themselves to the greatest danger in leading their men into battle on the Syrian heights, Sinai and Jerusalem. But what impressed me most was that in their hour of victory they had not become arrogant. A remarkable degree of friendliness was displayed towards the Arab population and even to prisoners of war whom we met in an Egyptian hospital on the Gaza strip still manned by Egyptian doctors in co-operation

with UNRWA and the occupying forces.

The atmosphere shows a realisation of the enormity of the problem the Israelis now unexpectedly find on their hands of having to administer territories containing about 1½ million Arabs, including many of those who were formerly refugees.

The nearest thing to bitterness was their feeling that while they had absorbed over a million immigrants (more than half of whom came penniless from Arab countries and some of whom, like those from the caves of Libya), Egyptians had done nothing to absorb the refugees in their area.

But there seemed to be a growing awareness that Israel now has a unique opportunity to show its willingness to play a leading role in helping to integrate the Arab refugees into normal life in the area. This problem cannot be minimised and the world must play its part if war is to be ended once and for all.

A variety of solutions were put forward by various Israeli Ministers and political leaders to whom we spoke. One recurring theme was the idea of an independent Arab Palestine state, consisting of the west bank of the Jordan and the Gaza strip. **The argument for this is based on the fact that the original United Nations plan envisaged a Jewish and an Arab state in what was then the mandated territory of Palestine but that following the war in which the Arab states invaded Israel, Israel took certain territory which was not allocated to her and Jordan annexed the west bank with Egypt occupying the Gaza strip which did not belong to them, and so no Arab state came into existence.**

A whole number of alternative proposals were put forward but what impressed all the Members of Parliament present was the obvious interest that Israeli leaders had in trying to solve this complex problem so as to produce a peaceful atmosphere in the area. The only point on which they were adamant was that Jerusalem could never again be divided. Those who witnessed the remarkable scenes when the Arabs from the old city poured into the Israeli side to see the sights and meet friends whom they had not seen for 20 years must accept that, if a divided city is united, nothing in the world will ever divide it again.

It was also apparent that in one way or another security of the whole of the Galilee area has to be safeguarded by the military neutralisation of the Syrian heights. These overlook a whole number of settlements and villages in the area and for 20 years those who live there went daily in fear of their and their children's lives from repeated terrorist raids and shelling. Between 1950 and 1956, for example 1,500 citizens were killed in such raids in Israel and our party was able to see the devastation in some of these border settlements where schools, libraries and crops had been raised with loving care from the formerly barren land only to be destroyed by gunfire.

Indeed from the Syrian heights themselves, one could see every individual house which an expert gunner could have picked off at will.

The burned-out tanks and battered gun emplacements and mine-fields for mile after mile bore witness to the fierceness of the fighting that must have taken place before the Syrian "Maginot Line" was stormed.

Having stood in the middle of a captured dump of arms all bearing Russian inscriptions, I can only say that the cynical connivance by the Russians in what might have been another Vietnam must be strongly opposed by all who like myself have refused to become warriors in the cold war.

It was perhaps significant that the most vociferous opposition to Russian strategy in the Middle East came not from opponents of Communism but from the veteran leader of the Israeli Communist Party, Dr. Sneh, who compared his position to the position of a French Communist when the Germans poured into France in 1940. He was confident the Russians would change their policy but he would not allow himself to be eliminated while waiting for the change.

Following our official visit, I was fortunate enough to visit a number of kibbutzim and meet the volunteers from Poale Zion at Sede Nehemya. They were all in fine fettle but a little tired after their cotton picking at four in the morning, and sent their good wishes to their friends back home.

At Kibbutz Yassur I met many former Mancunians and was impressed by the achievement of this kibbutz which with its new dining room, delightful swimming bath, pleasant living quarters and fertile fields was a remarkable contrast to the stony hills around, and a symbol of Israel's achievement.

In the occupied town of Kuneitrah, we were able to visit the United Nations forces and interview the Canadian commander and his Irish assistant who made us the most needed cup of tea I have had for many a long day.

One question concerning all the visiting MPs was the treatment of the Arab minority within Israel. While it is evident that both North African Jewish immigrants and Arabs, because of their background, have far less than their share of the better jobs, there is no official discrimination and indeed there is an attempt to correct balance. On the other hand, apart from the Druzes community, the Arabs in Israel are not conscripted for military service.

In the Christian-Arab town of Nazareth where we visited the Church of the Annunciation, we met the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, both Arabs, the latter being one of the seven Arab members of the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset. Similarly we visited the Arab-Jewish Institute at Haifa which aims at a better understanding between the two people, particularly in social, religious and cultural life.

I believe Israel can contribute towards the peace and understanding so needed by the area, by a magnanimous and imaginative handling of the refugee problem.

But a country where hardly a village was beyond the range of enemy guns cannot be expected to give up the occupied territories until such time as the Arab leaders are prepared to recognise its right to exist, and the great powers are willing to guarantee its right to live and its access to its essential waterways.

Peace in the Middle East would bring immeasurable benefit to both Israeli and Arab alike and one country, more than any other, would stand to gain, namely Jordan. Perhaps the one ray of hope which exists is that Jordan may see the foolishness of its action in launching its shells upon Israel, thus precipitating its subsequent disaster, and will understand the benefit that access to the sea and

co-operation in agriculture, forestry and irrigation with Israel, could bring to its people.

DIRECT PEACE TALKS THE ONLY WAY

By RAYMOND FLETCHER, M.P.

ISRRAEL is in exhilaratingly effervescent cocktail of a country. It is the only place on earth where the private soldiers are on first-name terms with generals, where cab drivers sometimes earn more than than Cabinet Ministers, where the trade union organisation is the largest employer, where youngsters whoop it up on orange juice and where an ancient Holy Book has been discovered to be a modern treatise on agriculture, fishing and armoured warfare.

It is a civilised place. Where else would the victorious commanders of a spectacularly successful army talk mainly of their sympathy for their misguided enemies and of a peaceful settlement with states that have called for twenty years for extermination?

It is a democratic place. Israelis talk politics all the time. They allow their Arab citizens to do the same and are prepared to live, with unbelievable tolerance, with the results. There are Communists in the Knesset who openly support Nasser. They are allowed to do so, and in Arabic too.

It is a socialist place. I accept no arithmetical definition of socialism. The exact proportion of private to public ownership is less of a guide to how much socialism you have than the spirit which pervades the whole society.

The question is: are Israelis pushed around by big monopolies? Some may be, but I would like to see anyone capable of pushing these people around for long. They are born organisers — of collective farms, unions, armed forces and resistance.

When I went to Israel in July, therefore, I had some bias in my baggage. As between democracy and dictatorship, as between socialism and capitalism, as between civilisation and backwardness I cannot pretend to be a neutral. I had, moreover, recently returned from a visit to Auschwitz. And twenty years ago I served in what was then British administered Palestine.

Yet I was not blinkered. Though a firm friend of Israel and a dedicated enemy of the enemies of the Jews, I did not travel blinkered. The best people can go wrong, especially when they are engaged on transforming society, and I wondered whether my Israeli friends had perhaps gone wrong during the run-up to the Six Day War.

So the questions that my colleagues and I fired at Israeli leaders — Prime Minister Eshkol, General Dayan, General Rabin, Members of the Knesset, the Arab mayor of Nazareth and others were not mere votes of thanks. We wanted to know if Israel had been justified in knocking out the Arab armies and whether she still had a civilised attitude towards her Arab neighbours.

I, for one, left these gruelling discussions with all my doubts dissolved. Naturally, I must not reveal what was said to us in confidence. I would like to. It is a credit to Israel that her Prime Minister should remind me so strongly of that wisecracking humanitarian, Charles Pannell, that her Minister of Defence should talk

so sanely of future co-operation with a more sensible Jordan and that her brilliant Chief of Staff should be so politically aware.

These were impressive men, leading an impressive people. Most impressive of all, they were astonishingly frank. There was no concealment of the difficulties that are beginning to sprout on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip — difficulties that will be aggravated by the humane way in which these occupied territories are being run.

Having confronted frankness in Israel I must be equally frank with some Labour friends here at home. I am under no kind of obligation to and my Israeli friends did not ask me to. But here I go, on my own as usual, and speaking for nobody else on our delegation except myself.

The Israelis were right to strike at the time they did, in the way that they did and at the targets that they did. You do not determine who started a war by trying to find who fired the first shot. We ourselves were the first to bomb Germany in World War II, but it was still Hitler's war.

Nasser and his allies have regarded themselves as being at war with Israel for twenty years. More Israelis were killed by Egyptian terrorists or Syrian artillery between 1956 and 1967 than died in the recent battles. Arab armies were mobilised — and they were not there to play at boy scouts.

"The Arab nation," screamed Egyptian T.V. on June 5th, "looks forward to our victory in the battle for the extermination of Israel." Cairo radio echoed these "socialist" sentiments 15 minutes later. "Oh, ye Arabs!", it howled, "Your brave and victorious armies are advancing against Israel to destroy the nests of Sin".

Damascus radio, so-called voice of a socialist state, went even further and lower. "Convert them into a graveyard of corpses and skulls," said one enthusiast on June 9th. "We shall pave our roads with their skulls."

There was a war on, of course, and broadcasters, unlike soldiers, tend to go off their heads at such times. But these obscenities have hit the air from Damascus and Cairo for nearly two decades. They are no more marginal to "Arab Socialism" than the tirades of Goebbels and the books of Rosenberg were marginal to Hitler's National Socialism.

The word "socialism" was used from 1933 onwards to condone and conceal what was to be the greatest crime in history. Why did German soldiers murder by the million in occupied Europe? Because they had been conditioned by years of propaganda. Many of those who served Goëbbels then are serving Nasser now.

Thanks to Israeli troops we did not see a repeat performance of Auschwitz. That we would have I no longer doubt. Arab soldiers, backward, ignorant peasants are not amenable to discipline at any time. Had they entered Tel Aviv, their minds aflame with hate, they would have disintegrated as an army and re-emerged as a murderous mob..

I talked to immigrants from Arab countries who had survived pogroms. They know.

I emphasise this once more. I do not care how many public works Nasser has created nor how much public ownership he has injected into Egyptian society. It is the tone and quality of Arab

nationalism that matters, and Arab nationalism is now demonstrably and stridently nothing more than anti-Israelism.

It is a compound of lies, hate and racialism and I am really astonished that any member of the Labour Party should see it as anything else.

So much for what the Israelis were fighting. They had no choice but fight the same thing in 1939. Yet intelligent men fight for a peace. What kind of peace do the highly-intelligent Israelis envisage? The key to their thinking is their resentment at the use of the word "aggrandisement".

Nobody we talked to talked the language of imperialism.

They will not give up the Old City of Jerusalem. That is the only territorial gain they regard as not negotiable. Frankly, I do not blame them. Quite apart from the emotions that surround this city, any Israeli government that made a deal that brought East Jerusalem back under Jordanian guns would deserve to be kicked out of office.

The rest of their gains are obviously a political and economic embarrassment to them. If they could get proper relations established with their neighbours and firm guarantees that the extermination of Israel is off the Arab agenda their emphasis will shift from politics to economics — and joint economic ventures with their neighbours too.

It is the Israelis who talk of a possible confederation with Jordan, of allowing Jordan access to the port of Haifa, of joint economic projects in de-salination and of joint efforts to re-settle and raise the living standards of the refugees.

But they cannot do much about it unless they get a phone call from Amman or Cairo to the effect that Arab and Jew can get together. They await such a phone call with almost touching eagerness.

For this victorious nation is not contaminated with militarism. Its citizen-soldiers repudiate the essence of militarism as they conspicuously reject its outward trappings. Feelings of inferiority generate militarism and these people — especially the young — are self-confident in the best sense of the term.

Israelis are right to demand security from their neighbours before they accept international control of any part of their frontiers from the United Nations. It is no use waving a UN resolution at a Syrian gunner who has zeroed in on your farm and your family. It is no use talking of the UN's high intentions to people who have seen the hate-education that has gone on in the refugee camps run by UNRWA.

All of which means that direct talks must take place between individual Arab states and Israel before the UN is asked to give a hand. There is no other way. The great big solution is just not possible yet. Israel has to find small, negotiable accommodations — such as some form of joint custody of the Holy Places, for instance — that might add up to something in the end and would certainly generate a mood of co-operation along the way.

Thirty-seven years ago, one of the creators of Arab nationalism spoke to a leading British Zionist. "The problem of Zionism," he said, "is the problem of the third generation. It is the grandsons of your immigrants who will make it succeed or fail, but the odds are

so much in its favour that the experiment is worth backing; and I back it not because of the Jews, but because a regenerated Palestine is going to raise the whole moral and material status of its Middle East neighbours."

Thus Lawrence of Arabia talked to Sir Lewis Namier. The grandsons have succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of both. The rest of Lawrence's prophecy has to be fulfilled—but is not Israel a land where prophecies *are* fulfilled?

JERUSALEM 'MUST REMAIN UNIFIED'

By TED ROWLANDS,

DURING the debates in the U.N. on the Middle East, only one resolution has gained the support of most member nations—a resolution criticising and condemning Israel's action in uniting Jerusalem.

It seems very ironic to me that this should be the only decision of the U.N. upon which the world can apparently agree. For, while the future peace of the whole area remains unresolved, the future of Jerusalem seems assured. As Foreign Secretary Eban assured the U.N.

"Jerusalem now united after her tragic division is no longer an arena for gun emplacements and barbed wire . . . For 20 years there has not been free access by men of all faiths to the shrines which are held in unique reverence. This access now exists. Israel is resolved to give effective expression, in co-operation with the world's great religions, to immunity and sanctity of all the Holy Places . . .

And yet the U.N. chose to condemn Israel for her action over Jerusalem.

As a member of the Parliamentary Delegation which visited Israel a few weeks ago, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Jerusalem and to discuss the future of the city with politicians, military leaders, and civil servants.

My visit was my first to Israel and to Jerusalem; but for the officials who accompanied us and who had spent 19 years in Israel's administration it was also a first visit to the Old City and the Holy Places.

They were clearly moved by the new experience, moved in some instances to tears. It brought home to us the cruel restrictions placed upon all Israelis and all Jews, from visiting the Holy Places. Again as Mr. Eban described,

"In our nation's history there have been few hours more intensely moving than the hour of our reunion with the Western Wall. A people had come back to the cradle of its birth. It had renewed its time with the memories which that reunion evokes . . .

Defence of Holy Places

Only three weeks after the war the peace of the city was remarkable. During the war there had been bitter fighting, and at the entrance to the Old City many of the houses had been badly damaged. It is not also widely known that Israel had lost a 100 more men that may have been necessary while trying to safeguard

the Holy Places. Desperate attempts had been made to dissuade Hussein from entering the war, and jeopardising the City. His reply had been a senseless shelling of the new city and seizure of the U.N. headquarters.

We visited the Old City the day before the Knesset took its momentous decision. Passing through the Mandelbaum Gate we appeared to enter another world. In 19 years the Old City seems to have stood still in time. The alleyways were very narrow and crowded with street traders selling fruit and vegetables to Israeli housewives. Regulations plastered on every window forbidding Israelis to buy, were being happily ignored.

There were some tragic signs of the long, long separation, particularly in what had been the Jewish quarter of the Old City. Many of the small synagogues had been abused as stables. Squatters had settled in some. Now the synagogues had been cleared and clumps of barbed wire temporarily guarded their entrances.

Yet the real surprising thing so soon after the bitter fighting was that we felt no sense of menace, nor fear at all, as we jostled our way unaccompanied by any soldier through the Casbah like routes which lead to the Holy Sepulchre and the Wailing Wall. Soldiers were more noticeable for their absence. The citizens were extremely friendly and eager to sell. It seemed that after 19 years of separation the City appeared to be enjoying its new found unity.

Before the day when the two parts of Jerusalem were to be united, many officials feared that the Old City would be swamped by the movement of people from the new into the Old City. Unexpected was the reverse flow of thousands of Arabs from the Old City. They flocked into the new city to behold the New Jerusalem which had grown during the 19 years out of their sight. There was almost an exchange of population. They took taxi rides, and were reported hunting for acquaintances of 20 years ago.

What we saw for ourselves, what we heard from everyone we spoke to during our stay points to the unreality of the U.N. resolution on Jerusalem.

First it is politically unrealistic to believe that the city can be torn apart again under any settlement. People in Jerusalem were unanimous that no politician would survive 24 hours if he was to propose or agree to that. The decision and commitment over Jerusalem is irrevocable.

It is reported that Hussein will refuse to negotiate without obtaining a guarantee that Old Jerusalem would be restored to Jordan. When we asked a distinguished minister and member of the Cabinet which he would choose, he replied without hesitation — Jerusalem.

It is not, however, only political realities which should force the world to recognise the unification of the Holy City. Commonsense should compel the U.N. to confirm the unexpected result of the war.

Proposals for the internationalisation of the whole city may seem superficially attractive to safeguard access to the Holy Places, and to ensure that no minority suffers. Any system of international control over Jerusalem, however, is doomed to failure before it starts. Such a proposal would achieve the unhappy distinction of alienating all and satisfying no one. As a member of the Government wryly remarked the Holy Places may be holy and the city inter-

national but the people are neither. Jerusalem is after all the capital of Israel with its Government offices, Civil Service, Parliament, University, and Memorial to the dead of the second World War. What victorious state, indeed, ever handed over control of its own capital?

Any scheme of internationalisation would be an unnecessarily complicated method of achieving what the world presumably asks of Israel—to give free access to the Holy Places. This assurance has already been given by Mr. Eban in the U.N. It must be remembered that, theoretically, free access has been the cry for 19 years. Yet for 19 years Jews have been prohibited access by the Jordan authorities. The World failed to provide the very guarantees which now Israel offers to all. The record of British Governments since 1949 in pressing Jordan to give free access has not been a good one. In a reply to a P.Q. last week we were informed that no Government had made any formal representations to Jordan since 1949.

There remains finally the question of the inhabitants of the old City. What are their wishes and where do their interests lie? If the first few days are anything to go by the process of learning to live together will be a relatively painless one. Despite fundamental differences of outlook, and religions and, despite 19 years of separations, there is among the citizens of the old and new city a unity of interest in freedom to move from one part of the city to the other, freedom to trade and to communicate. Like all great cities a united Jerusalem will have a variety of interests to accommodate.

But these can surely be safeguarded best and maintained—not by any artificially imposed solution, but rather by finding common ground and common interest in working together.

One of the great success stories of the last few years has been the developing common bond between Arab and Jew in Israel. During the War there was a remarkable and general demonstration of loyalty shown by Arabs in Israel. Wherever we went on tour and whoever we spoke to, commented upon this important factor during the war.

I believe that the organisation and administration of a united Jerusalem will be a NEW challenge and, I am sure, a new accomplishment in Arab Jewish relations. It is therefore, vital that essential co-operation among municipal leaders of the old and the new city is quickly established. The bitter lessons of attempts to co-operate in 1956/7 in occupied territories must be learnt, and a categorical assurance must be given to all that, as far as Jerusalem is concerned, this is a final solution.

The challenge of planning the expansion and development of a beautiful city, of fusing old and new, of uniting Arab and Jew is in microcosm the challenge of the whole Middle East. As Foreign Secretary Eban described in his U.N. address:

“For the first time in history no Mediterranean nation is in subjection. All are endowed with sovereign freedom. The challenge now is to use this freedom for creative growth. There is only one road to that end. It is the road of recognition, of direct contact of free co-operation. It is the road of peaceful co-existence. This road, as the ancient Prophets of Israel foretold, leads to Jerusalem.”

ISRAEL AFTER VICTORY

By DAVID MARQUAND, M.P.

FOR twenty years Israel has lived under suspended sentence of execution. Now she feels that her smashing military victory has given her a reprieve. In fact, however, the reprieve will only be ratified if her would-be executioners agree. This is the central dilemma of Israeli politics today; and not surprisingly, no one knows the answer to it. If I had to pick out one predominant impression left by a whirlwind visit to Israel last month, it would be one of confusion and uncertainty. Everyone realises that Israel now faces the greatest opportunity — and the greatest challenge — in her existence as a state. Everyone knows that the way in which she faces that challenge will decide her fate — almost certainly for a generation, and perhaps for ever. At that point, however, agreement ends.

Every politically-interested Israeli — and all Israelis seem to be politically-interested — has his own plan for the peace settlement, for the refugees, for the West Bank. Many have more than one. The Israeli Foreign Minister has drawn up seven alternative proposals for the future of the occupied territories; and after half-an-hour in the country anyone with a piece of paper and a pencil could easily do the same. Despite this babel of conflicting voices, however, there is clearly a broad national consensus on a few major issues; and if our policy in the Middle East is to be based on reality, it is necessary for us to be clear on what that consensus is. We may not like it; and we may even seek to change it. But there is no point in ignoring its existence.

In the first place it is clear that all Israelis believe that Jerusalem must remain undivided; and must remain under Israeli sovereignty. This is a universal belief, shared by all political parties from the extreme Right to the Communists. One Israeli Cabinet Minister told me categorically that no Israeli Government which gave up Jerusalem could last for twenty-four hours; and the same Minister went on to say that if he had to choose between Jerusalem and a peace treaty with Jordan, he would choose Jerusalem. It is, no doubt, an irrational attitude; and it may conceivably turn out to be an extremely foolish one. It is nevertheless a fact.

The second point — on which the consensus is only slightly less complete — is that Israel cannot possibly absorb more than a small number of Arabs into her own territory. The Israeli Communist Party might be prepared to do this, and so might the Arab members of Mapam. They would, however, be in a tiny minority. It is true that in the last few years the Arab community seems to have been more closely integrated with the Jewish majority than ever before; and almost every Israeli leader I talked to paid tribute to the 'loyalty' of the Arabs during the recent war. To absorb a large new Arab population, however, would be a different matter; and only a handful of intellectual idealists would do it.

It follows that there is virtually no support in Israel for the outright acquisition of the Arab territories now under military occupation. Israel is a democracy, pledged to equal rights for all her citizens. If the West Bank of the Jordan were to become part of Israel, the Arabs living there would have votes in elections and the

right to form political parties. This would mean that at one jump Israel would have to reckon with the electoral consequences of an Arab minority comprising 40 per cent of the population; and since the Arab birth-rate is higher than the Jewish one, the minority become a majority within ten or twenty years. This is a risk which no one in a responsible position in Israel would be prepared to take.

The third point on which there seems to be universal agreement is rather more subtle. I went to Israel expecting a mood of intransigent nationalism, tinged with chauvinism and perhaps with militarism. **The intransigent nationalism is there all right; but the chauvinism and militarism are conspicuous by their absence.** After seeing one of the kibbutzim in Northern Galilee which had been shelled by Russian guns on the Syrian heights — not only during the war but before it started — I would have been able to understand, and even to sympathise with, a desire for revenge. In fact, the remarkable thing about Israel is that no one seems to feel anything of the kind. The Israeli Army, moreover, is clearly the nearest thing in the modern world to the Citizen's Army about which the French Socialist, Jean Jaurès, theorised before the first world war. It is tough, well-officered and well-trained. But it is at the same time a civilian army, bent on returning as quickly as possible to its peacetime occupations, not on military conquest.

What Israel wants, in fact, is not revenge or conquest, but peace and security. The problem is how to get them; and the dilemma is that, to some extent at least, they may be incompatible. In strictly military terms the best solution to Israel's security problem would probably be a frontier revision leaving Israeli troops in control of the critical areas from which her people have so often been menaced in the last twenty years: the Syrian heights, the hills around Jerusalem, the Jordanian border at the narrow waist of Israel, and the Gaza strip which has been a breeding ground for terrorist infiltrators. Such a solution, however, would involve considerable territorial gains; and it is hard to see any Arab Government accepting it.

A similar difficulty, though of a more complicated kind, impedes a solution of the thorny problem of the original Palestinian refugees who fled from what is now Israel, in 1948. Every Israeli seems to agree that the refugees must be settled on the land — and the obvious place to do it is the West Bank of the Jordan. But in their commendable anxiety to heal this running sore, the Israelis do not seem to realise quite how difficult it will be for them to administer the medicine. They realise, of course, that they lack the resources to resettle the refugees on their own, and that massive international aid would be necessary. But they seem less willing to recognise that even if international aid is forthcoming, two formidable obstacles will remain.

Arab refugees who have been demoralised by twenty years of meagre international charity, and fed on twenty years of racist anti-Jewish propaganda, are hardly likely to take kindly to being resettled by their Israeli conquerors, however enlightened and humane those conquerors may be. Even if they were, for the Israeli Government to resettle the refugees on Arab territory now under occupation by the Israeli Army would surely be taken to imply permanent Israeli occupation of the territories concerned. That might still be

true, even if international aid were available to pay the bill. The obstacle which this would place in the way of a settlement is obvious.

It is true, of course, that talk of a peace settlement in present circumstances is optimistic, and may be Utopian. In theory, then, Israel might be wise to base her policy on the assumption that no peace settlement is likely. But although this would solve some problems, it would create others. Whatever might be the case with the Syrian heights and the Gaza Strip, Israel can hardly leave the West Bank under permanent military occupation. If it is not handed back to Jordan, some other status must be found for it. At the moment there is much vague talk of creating an autonomous Palestinian state on the West Bank, linked to Israel economically and in terms of foreign policy and defence. From the point of view of the people living there, this might be the best solution. To the outside world, however, it might look suspiciously like a kind of Middle-Eastern Bantustan; and quite apart from this, it is hard to see that an autonomous Arab state linked with Israel would be politically viable so long as Israel is in a state of belligerency with the other Arab states in the area.

In the end, it is clear that none of these problems can be solved by Israel herself. Solutions will be enormously difficult in any case; and without close involvement by the outside world, they will almost certainly be impossible. At the moment of writing, constructive involvement by the outside world seems unlikely. Yet in the long run, the very magnitude of the dangers may give faint reasons for hope. For it is surely clear that the rest of the world can no longer afford to allow the conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbours to fester on indefinitely. Israel's geographical position is such that if war seems imminent, she is forced to strike the first blow. She has no room for retreat; and the only possible strategy for her armies is to advance at speed. But for that she needs air superiority; and she must therefore ensure that her enemies' air forces are grounded at the start of the fighting.

That, of course, is what happened this summer. But it is at least possible that the Arab states have now learned the same lesson. Unless a peace settlement is reached, in fact, this war may have created an even more unstable situation in the Middle East than the situation which existed there before. Instability of that kind, however, would be a danger to the whole world and not just to the countries concerned. The problems involved in reaching a peace settlement, in other words, concern the whole world — and it is up to the world to find a solution.

Foreword to LABOUR AND ISRAEL

Published 1968

By The Rt. Hon Richard Crossman, O.B.E., M.P.

I AM GLAD TO CONTRIBUTE a few words of preface to this very useful symposium by a very mixed—and therefore all the more representative—group of Labour backbenchers. Unlike me, all of them have had the good fortune to visit Israel recently and both to see themselves the possibilities and problems created by the six-day war and also to discuss with the Israelis what must be done if this round in the Arab/Jewish struggle is not to be followed by yet another round.

As one of those who championed a Jewish state in Palestine before Israel existed, I was interested to read in these essays how many of the features of what, before 1948, was the way of life of a Jewish minority under a British mandate, have flourished under 20 years of independence. Israel today is not merely the only Social Democratic country in the whole Middle East, it is also the only Democracy outside the Commonwealth which shares the British idea of freedom, even including a slice of British humour. I must admit that Israel is the only country apart from my own where I truly and deeply feel at home and I am delighted that these recent Socialist visitors began to share my feelings.

There is another point which each of them makes in his own way and with which I am in entire agreement. As we all know the considered and deliberate Arab response to the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948 was the invasion by five armies. Under the United Nations auspices this intervention was brought to a halt along armistice lines so intolerable and in many places so absurd that both sides assumed them to be temporary; Palestine became a partitioned country, like Ireland, Korea and Vietnam. And here too the temporary might well have frozen into the permanent had it not been for the Arab refusal to permit the armistice to be converted into a peace treaty and the Arab determination to continue the war by all means short of war across armistice lines. Indeed one of

the few bonds which has united the Arab League since the creation of Israel has been the determination to maintain the state of war. Basically there was only one reason why peace was impossible between 1948 and 1967 and that was the refusal in principle of the Arab States to recognise Israel's existence by negotiating with her.

The six-day war not merely prevented the temporary armistice lines becoming permanent but rubbed them out altogether, thereby creating a new position in which many of us hoped that old follies would be forgotten and a new realism would enter into Arab relations with Israel. With the United Nations armistice lines rubbed out there was surely a chance for the kind of statesmanship which could evolve frontiers of peace. Also so far such statesmanship has not emerged at any level and I myself am convinced that it cannot emerge except by direct confrontation between the belligerents. No one else can make peace for the Jews and Arabs. They must make it themselves or else continue the state of permanent war. When my colleagues emphasise the vital importance of direct negotiations between Israel and her neighbours I am sure they are right and I hope they will go on insisting that the main peacemaking function of the great powers in this dispute is to create the conditions in which these direct negotiations can take place.

RESURRECTION IN THE WAKE OF AUSCHWITZ

By EDWIN BROOKS,

TO BE BORN a *Welsh Nonconformist* is to grow up a vicarious Jew. Which being interpreted, means that those of us whose Sabbaths were spent in the fierce company of the Lord God of Hosts, can never be strangers to the people of the Book. *For the Welsh in particular, who also saw desolation and exodus during the Thirties, there was no failure of insight into the spiritual hunger of those for whom Europe became a charnel house.* The longing for home which we call hiraeth, so powerfully evoked in that so-familiar psalm 137, was part of our cultural inheritance. *And when Israel fought for its resurrection in the wake of Auschwitz, I had an adolescent sense of history finally regarding the brave and the persecuted.*

Years later, when I conducted research in the Polish "Recovered Territories," I was to meet another people whose roots ran deep down the centuries. There too was the same sense of the wheel of history coming full turn. The great eastward surge of the Teuton had at last been reversed, and a Slav tide of some eight million folk had advanced to the ancient frontiers of the Tenth Century Polish kingdom.

Such an intoxicating sense of historical destiny can produce powerful and emotive concepts. Indeed, without some understanding of the cultural continuum in which our societies have evolved, there can be no political ideas or institutions. To minimise the strength of our emotional ancestry is to emasculate socialism.

But history can invoke a subtle tyranny of concepts. An obsession with history—a love of the dead and buried—is a form of political necrophilia. At its worst, it can lead to fascist romancing about blood and soil, to lebensraum, and to a contempt for those who are not of the Chosen People. Historical grudges, like old soldiers, never die, and in many cases—such as de Gaulle's attempt to revenge Montcalm after two centuries—they do not even fade away.

Nowhere is the tyranny of historical concepts, in all their inevitable crudity and over-simplification, more obvious than in the Middle East in 1968. Endlessly Israel is denounced as a tool of imperialism—not least by Communist Russia whose land acquisitions after the Second World War included areas of East Prussia to which the Soviet

Union had not the slightest historical claim. *The most corrupt and reactionary rulers of states where slavery has yet to be abolished—let alone feudalism and capitalism—are regarded by ostensibly Marxist propagandists as less worthy targets of denunciation than democratic Israel.*

The cynicism of such Communist propaganda is as breath-taking as was Anthony Eden's claim in 1956 to be showing no preference in the Sinai engagement. It is small wonder that the Arab peasant, whose life is little less wretched than was that of his ancestor building the Pharaohs' pyramids, is unable to distinguish fact from fiction. *And of course, from the standpoint of the small elites who stand at the remote apex of power and privilege in so many of the Arab countries, it must be refreshing to have the heirs of Bolshevism fostering the vast distortions and distractions which help frustrate social revolution and renovation throughout Islam.*

THREATS AGAINST ISRAEL

Now this is not to say that the policies of Israel are always beyond reproach. As far as I am concerned, Israel is no more sacrosanct and immune from reasoned criticism than is the British Labour Government—of which I am also . . . well, nearly always—a Friend. Indeed, the point needs to be made even more explicitly, because I fear that in the end abuse and the blood-curdling threats against Israel are in danger of invoking and extremist reaction. Extremism pursues a deadly logic of polarising the argument, and two of my Parliamentary colleagues who recently spoke successively—but from different standpoints—about the Middle East conflict, epitomised the danger of seeing the problem as a battleground between the forces of light and of darkness.

NO COMPROMISE

On one point however there can be no compromise. As long as the Arab states have as their avowed policy the destruction of the state itself—with all its implications of genocide—then it is inevitable that Israel will undertake so-called pre-emptive strikes. Those of my colleagues who regard it as peculiarly wicked when Israeli aircraft break up concentrations of terrorists getting ready for a fresh bout of murder, arson and terror, should address their complaints to the Arab government who either will not, or cannot, accept that Israel has the same basic right to existence and security as any other state and member of the United Nations.

Certainly I find the killing of innocent children and poverty stricken Arab peasants appalling. But one can only end a war—and this is really a permanent war in which episodes like the Six Days of last year differ more in degree than in kind from the many hundreds of days which preceded and succeeded them—by direct confrontation

between the belligerents leading to realistic negotiation of peace terms. To pretend anything else is to reconcile oneself to war in perpetuity, with nuclear escalation and world wide conflagration becoming more and more likely as the years roll on.

This is surely a long term diplomatic objective, and it will not be easy to reach. Yet I think there is only one way of smoothing the road to such a distant goal: economic progress in the Arab countries. I still believe that when people have nothing to lose but their chains they are least vulnerable to reason, and most vulnerable to demagogues and adventures. To put it very crudely, if a future Arab government thought the Aswan High Dam would be destroyed in the event of further hostilities with Israel, I am sure that there would be caution in high places in Cairo. Or again, the longer the Suez Canal stays closed, and the more likely it appears that future oil shipments will need to be routed via the Cape, the greater the economic (and therefore political) strains will be placed upon Egypt's fragile economy.

This is why I rejoice at the news of significant oil strikes in Egypt—the country which more than any contains the solution to Israeli security problems in the years ahead. But so much more needs to be done, and desperately quickly. At Scarborough, before Labour came to power, Harold Wilson talked of the potential importance of simple machines for lifting water. Where are they? What indeed are the developed societies doing in the whole field of intermediate technology? Why not a massive programme of hydrology, irrigation, agricultural education, and de-salination? And if the question is asked about finances, might we not devise international regulations for allocating a minimum proportion of oil revenues to such projects, instead of tolerating conspicuous consumption of Cadillacs? Perhaps the real title of this article should be Labour and the Arab states. Then we should have little difficulty in recognising the problems of poverty which our Movement arose to fight—and in remembering that wealth and poverty co-exist only by denying a common humanity.

INTERCHANGE OF INFORMATION ESSENTIAL

By JOHN ELLIS,

IN DISCUSSING the relationship between a Labour Government in Britain and a Labour Government in Israel the question of peace in the Middle East is the most important issue. However, before reaching into that subject let me say that during my recent visit to Israel I was struck by the similarity of position as regards questions of economic policy that are facing our two nations. In discussions with political leaders and Histadrut time after time you had only to close your eyes and you were back in Britain. The need to produce more and so export more, the need for a just prices and incomes policy, the balance of payments difficulties, how to achieve greater worker participation in the day to day running of industry, the development of the social services, health, welfare and education; in all these fields the problems were fundamentally the same whilst in different settings. Here is a ground for a greater degree of interchange of information and knowhow between our two countries.

Histadrut, the trade union organisation, is the biggest employer of labour in Israel. In this field there is no doubt that important lessons have been learnt and problems overcome. *I shall long remember talking to bus drivers in Egged Dan Co-operative and their justifiable pride that they owned the buses and were responsible for the undertaking and had a direct say in how the profits were to be used.*

Here in Britain, we in the Socialist movement and Government, have a direct interest in the experience in Israel when thinking of policies as regards the development of trade unions and nationalised industries. Similarly we have much to give in the way of knowledge of how we in Britain have organised our social services and in particular free education for the entire school life of our children. This is not to say that the solutions arrived at in either country will be entirely relevant or acceptable to the other but of one thing I am quite sure, that a rich and rewarding two way flow of information and study would be vastly rewarding to both countries as they face up to finding solutions to these kind of questions.

Britain, with its Commonwealth ties, has a rich understanding with many parts of the world which face many of the problems that

Israel dealt with in bringing the land into cultivation, reclaiming desert, making the best use of scarce water, settling thousands onto the land. This expertise could be made use of through British Government agencies where we have aid programmes currently running. Indeed perhaps the greatest tragedy of the whole of the Middle East is the fact that here the success story of the development of Israel cannot be exported to neighbouring Arab countries because of the political bitterness of the two sides. Who can doubt that development of Israel, won at such cost, if applied in the neighbouring Arab countries would not materially be of benefit in raising the standard of living of countless thousands of the inhabitants of those countries who at present live at subsistence level.

ISRAEL SUCCESS STORY

Having said all this there can be no doubt that the most crucial test of our relationship between the Labour Government of Britain and a Labour Government of Israel must be the stand we take as regards the policies that we follow in international foreign policy. Here it would be as well if we face facts. It is true that we have from the point of view of maintaining world peace a vested interest in any area from which there is a danger of nuclear conflict spreading. It is also true that we have a direct economic interest in the Arab parts of the Middle East as far as oil is concerned, the supply of which is still vital to our economy. One of the great tragedies as far as the more developed nations of the West are concerned has been the insistence that legitimate interests have always been bound up by direct military involvement in areas and by military bases. This approach has left its heritage of bitterness behind. Today this is becoming out of date and the more modern approach of maintaining this influence by the supply of arms is more the rule.

To me the approach to international relationship was never more disastrously demonstrated when during the fighting between Israel and the Arab countries, we witnessed the spectacle of all the major world powers crying for peace in the area and a stop to fighting, whilst at the same time going on supplying arms in the area.

I believe we should make it quite clear, as far as the British Government is concerned that we should say to all countries and keep saying it, that as far as oil or any other trade is concerned, we desire and believe it is to our mutual advantage to trade with you and for this reason we want friendly relations. We should equally say that we will not, as part of our need for such trade, accept that we will supply arms or give military support or indeed political support to any country if we do not agree with their aims if that is the price we must pay for such trade. In the context of the Middle East this means that we should make our position clear regarding the

policy Britain in following and that this should be that whatever arguments there are about the territory that Israel now holds and I believe that there is need for major concessions here, we should say that Israel is a sovereign country in her own right. Whatever the future holds as far as the Middle East is concerned it is one in which Israel will be an integral part of the Middle East and that although we will use our good offices in any discussions towards an agreement the Arab countries must accept that fact. This is a matter of common justice and should not be blurred by any trade needs for oil or anything else which we may desire as far as the Arab countries are concerned.

PEACE TALKS

I believe that if the major world powers made it clear to the Arab world that we insisted before any aid or supply of arms to those countries, that we expected them to enter into meaningful talks with the Government of Israel and that whatever arrangements were arrived at, it must be on the basis that Israel had a continuing future as a country in the Middle East and that whatever boundaries were arrived at by mutual agreement that these must be recognised and respected by all concerned.

I believe that if these policies were forthrightly made clear then the existing understanding between this country and Israel that has always been, particularly as far as the Labour movement is concerned, would be immeasurably strengthened. Further that such an approach if taken up by the other world powers would lead to a stabilisation of the situation in the Middle East which would be satisfactory, not only to Israel, but to the Arab countries as well as lead to those resources which are being used in the whole area for military means being put to use for the enrichment of human beings in the entire area for which there is such a need today.

ISRAEL AND THE LEFT

By RAYMOND FLETCHER, M.P.

ISRAELI SOCIALISTS who travel abroad in search of understanding find themselves in a ghetto that is no less real for being invisibly walled. Amos Keynan, for example, was not even allowed into the revolutionary Cuba he wants to love and was publicly insulted by British pacifists he was anxious to befriend. For, in the eyes of so many on the Left, he has repudiated the only role they want a Jew to play. He refused to be a victim, the object of a million tears and the subject of a thousand acres of printed protest. He fought. He won. He helped save his nation from obliteration and his people from annihilation. He cannot be forgiven.

It is all very strange—especially when one considers how forgiving the Left has been to President Nasser. The Egyptian dictator can tell the editor of the Bombay journal *Blitz*, as he did on October 4, 1958, that he believes in the authenticity of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and can instruct his representative at an Arab League conference, as he did on January 28, 1964, to propose its renewed distribution in Asia and Africa. He can even give an interview to the Neo-Nazi *Deutsche Nationalzeitung und Soldatenzeitung* in which he said "the lie of the six million murdered Jews is not taken seriously by anyone" (see *Minority of One*, September, 1967). These abominations are brushed aside as indiscretions. After all, as one MP informed me as though it closed the argument, Nasser also reads *Tribune* and admires Michael Foot.

There is a point beyond which silliness becomes sinister. It was reached in the 1930's by only one member of the Labour Party, Hugh Ross Williamson, who declared that Hitler, though nutty on race, was sound on Socialism. It has now been reached by many members who command more support and respect than Williamson ever dreamed of. In the interests of the inner health of our own movement, this sinister silliness must be confronted confounded.

It is, of course, different in kind from the pro-Arabism that has always been with us and will always be with us so long as the Foreign Office is. The ghost of Ernest Bevin walks in its corridors as vigorously as it thrusts itself into Christopher Mayhew's speeches. The confusion on the Left, moreover, does not derive from the anti-Jewishness that contaminates the lower depths of the Labour Party. The Member of Parliament who refused to sign a motion supporting Israel on

the grounds that he had never seen a Jewish coal miner is not worth naming, let alone refuting.

Yet confusion it is and it derives, as most political confusion does, from twisted virtues rather than incurable vices. It is a virtue to espouse the interests of the Arab refugees, the most conspicuous and most unfortunate of the victims of the 20-year war. It is a virtue to assert that Palestinian Arabs have a case and should enjoy rights. It is a virtue to insist that the world community, through the United Nations, should have a say in the matter and that what it says should be heeded.

Even virtue, however, can be carried too far. Let me illustrate the point by briefly removing my argument from its Middle East moorings. In 1945 millions of German refugees streamed westwards, forcibly expelled from East Prussia and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. All of them suffered and many of them died. Yet is there a Socialist in the world who would change the Oder-Neisse line or the Western frontier of Czechoslovakia? Socialist doctrine provides no sanction for the punishment of whole peoples. We are sorry for the victims of Hitler's war but are totally hostile to those of them who campaign for a return to what they call "the lost territories". The peace of Europe is more important than the homesickness—or desire for revenge—of the expellees. Socialists, unlike Nasser and some of his ministers, neither write for nor give interviews to the German revenge-seekers who publish the *Deutsche Nationalzeitung*.

Yet the Oder-Neisse line represents as great a denial of the right to self-determination as the Israeli frontier of June 1967 was alleged to be. When we accept it we fracture our logic and need apologise to nobody for doing so. But why is it so impossible for some of us to look at the Middle East through the same spectacles that we wear when looking at Europe?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is true that the historical background is not so clear. Yet certain landmarks stand out from the fog. On November 29, 1947 the UN Assembly accepted that Palestine should be partitioned and two states, one Arab one Jewish, created. Both East and West, Russians and Americans, supported the recommendation. The Jewish Agency accepted what it considered a compromise with some regret. The Arabs refused to accept it at all. They started fighting. Jamal Husseini, then acting chairman of the Arab Higher Committee, was quite frank about this in a statement to the Security Council. "We have never concealed the fact," he said, "that we began the fighting" (Security Council Official Records, April 23, 1948). On May 15, 1948, the Arab states invaded the infant state of Israel. *Everything they have attempted and proclaimed since flows from that first invasion. It was described by Trygve Lie, then Secretary-General of the*

UN, as "the first armed aggression which the world had seen since the end of the war." The Arab states have been in a state of war with Israel for 20 years and continually affirm that they will not make peace.

WHO STARTED IT

This is the context within which the abstract formulae of the Left should be applied. Aggression is wrong, creating refugees is wrong, expanding frontiers by force is wrong—but who started it and who continues it? It is permissible in 1968 to take into account what conditioned Karl Marx's thought a century ago: the social structures of states in conflict. When Paris was run by Napoleon III, Marx supported Prussia. As soon as the workers of Paris established the Commune, however, the question of who was right in the Franco-Prussian conflict dwindled to an irrelevant abstraction. The Socialist theorist campaigned for the Socialist workers of Paris. Imbued with the same realism, Marx did not hold up his hands in horror when the Crimean War broke out. He wanted Tzarist Russia defeated at the hands of the lesser evils, Britain and France. What is more he told the Allies, in the columns of the *New York Tribune*, just how to do it.

Israel in 1948 was an infant social democracy. Her enemies, ideologically armed by the Nazi Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, were feudal, backward and barbarous. Their victory would have dragged all Palestine back to the 12th century and turned Tel Aviv and Haifa into Auschwitz-style crematoria. Marx would probably never have supported Zionism. But can anyone doubt, given the criteria he thought and wrote by, that he would have supported social democracy against regimes that made Tzar Nicholas I look like a progressive?

The Six-Day War was a campaign in the larger war that began in May, 1948. My attitude towards it is wholly conditioned by that fact. Though Egypt, Syria and Iraq have had revolutions, and Jordan has made some progress, they inherited their Holy War (as they themselves describe it) from the unholy alliance of 1948. Israel, despite her successes in three campaigns, remains what she was—a beleaguered social democratic state.

But, we are not told by the military experts of *Peace News*, the Arabs did not want a war. Does not their quick defeat, chime in the commentators on some Polish journals, prove that they were not prepared for it? Hitler, of course, did not want a war. He turned to fighting only when he could not get what he wanted by threatening. There are captured Arab operational orders, however, that give the lie to the whining claim that Arab dispositions in June, 1968, were purely defensive, just as there are the texts of Arab broadcasts that announce the liquidation of the Jews rather than the liberation of Palestine as the object of the exercise.

At whatever point the Left's arguments against Israel are shifted from the abstract to the concrete they dissolve. A UN resolution is not complied with. Black mark against Israel. *But would any of my Left-wing friends comply if, say, they were farming below the Golan Heights and compliance brought back Syrian artillery within range of their back gardens? And what would they do if the guns started firing, as they did with lethal regularity for years before the June campaign? Run up the hills waving the UN resolution? Or ask their friends in the House of Commons to table an early day motion? Syrian gunners read neither UN resolutions nor early day motions.*

British Socialists, moreover, do not treat all UN resolutions as Holy Writ. (Or is it only a matter of time before *Tribune* demands the return of Gibraltar to Spain?) Yet the particular UN resolution to which the Left is attached is a good one. All that I argue is that it will remain a scrap of paper until the Arab states and their state of war with Israel, discuss peaceful guarantees with Israel, and accept for themselves what they consider binding on others. It takes two sides to make a peace and enforce an agreement.

Let the Arab states make peace, or even sit down with Israelis to talk about making peace, then the whole context changes and I, for one, would have no hesitation in re-joining old comrades with whom I am at the moment in conflict. For it is then that the refugee problem can move to the top of the agenda, then that plans can be worked out for Middle East development that will make futile all the disputation about which people occupies what land, then that the formulae of international socialism can be advocated and applied. The time is not yet, as we all said in 1940 when we accepted Churchill's leadership in a struggle for socialism.

My support for Israel, I should add, does not imply support for everything Israel does or all that Israeli leaders say. I can vote Labour and disagree with the Labour Government at one and the same time. I am not a Jew, *I support the socialist dockers of Haifa, the socialist builders of Beersheba, the socialist farmers on the shores of Galilee, the socialist mayor of Nazareth, who has given his Arab people better houses and better conditions than they would get in Jordan, and the socialist soldiers who stand guard over this inspiring experiment in transforming deserts into gardens and who will one day join with their Arab neighbours to beat swords into ploughshares.*

WHY LABOUR SHOULD SUPPORT ISRAEL

By ERIC S. HEFFER, M.P.

MY ATTITUDE to Israel has passed through a series of changes. When Israel was established by resolution of the United Nations, like most Socialists, I was delighted. Later, I became extremely critical because of her involvement in the Suez affair. However, I have always believed that Israel had a right to her independence and existence. I support Israel today because I believe that in the circumstances in which she found herself in June 1967, she had no alternative, but to act in the way she did.

I support Israel, and I believe Labour as a whole should support Israel, because it is the only genuine democratic and socialist orientated state in the Middle East. An essential ingredient of socialism is democracy, and Israel certainly has that. There are, naturally enough, aspects of Israeli policy which can be criticised. It must be remembered, however, that such policies are criticised inside Israel by Israelis and in the most trenchant manner. Israel is not a monolithic state with one party rule. There is a proliferation of political parties and groups in Israel, possibly too many. Not only are there two socialist parties, but also two communist parties exist both operating legally. A situation that does not occur in any other Middle-Eastern state.

SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

From a socialist viewpoint, it is important to look at the character of the Israeli state. It is often described, sometimes regretfully by Left-Wing socialists, as an outpost of Imperialism. If this were true, then it would be right to condemn Israel, but I believe the facts prove such statements to be completely without foundation. Before I turn to Israeli Foreign policy, let me examine two institutions in particular in Israel which I believe are of great importance. Firstly, the Kibbutz and secondly the Histadrut (the Federation of Labour).

KIBBUTZIM

A Kibbutz is not a collective or even a co-operative farm. It is a communal establishment where life is lived in common, without

private property or a money economy. The kibbutzim naturally enough have developed from their early pioneering days and have moved on from being purely agricultural colonies to colonies which include light industry. Industries which supply the kibbutzim with manufactured goods, as well as earning money to expand their economy as a whole. Julius Braunthal says of the Kibbutz, "To the foreign students of socialism, the Kibbutz appears to be almost a perfect microcosm of the socialist society—a society of equal and free men and women who have individually united in a common effort to realise a new way of social life; who have abandoned the institutions of private property and money, who share in their work as they share in the fruits of their work; and who live according to the noble Marxian ideal "From each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs'."

HISTADRUT

The Histadrut (the Federation of Labour), is a Trade Union organisation plus. It does not merely defend the workers against the employers but itself is one of the largest employers in Israel. It either "directly or through co-operatives . . . runs marble quarries and brick-works, cement, foundry, steel-rolling and steel-smelting plants, glass, ceramics and wood-work factories, to mention only a few of its many industrial enterprises. It organises and runs banks, insurance companies and printing and publishing houses, and engages in a wide range of educational and cultural and social activities".

When I and my Parliamentary colleagues met the leaders of the Histadrut in 1967, one of the important discussions going on within the organisation was the question of democratic management. The Yugoslav experiment of Workers Councils was being closely examined, and it was generally agreed that greater involvement and participation in decision making was necessary for those engaged in industry at all levels. *Aharon Becker, the Secretary-General of the Histadrut opening the 76th National Council in Tel Aviv 26th April 1964 said this, "We are now trying to apply, in fact and in deed, an idea that we have been talking of so much in recent years, namely the participation of workers in management and the simultaneous introduction of a profit-sharing scheme".* It would seem as if the words of Ber Borochov are coming true, when in 1917, he said "Zionism is the only answer to the economic and historic needs of the Jewish people. It will be realised through the Zionist Movement, through Poale Zion, through our labours and struggles . . ." I should, I think, make it clear that I am by no means accepting the Zionist answer as the correct one or that it is acceptable to all Jewish people, or non-Jewish people. *However, it is clear the State of Israel embodies the Labour Zionist principles, and it therefore deserves the support of democratic socialists throughout the world.*

Since Israel became a State, twenty years ago, she has been a shining example to every state in the Middle-East. By hard work, devotion and sheer guts the people of Israel have transformed much of the territory into a great, green garden, contrasting to the arid sands of much of her neighbours' territory. It can of course be argued, that Israel has been helped by the financial aid of the Jewish communities throughout the world, especially from the United States. This is true, but without the work of the people of Israel the "miracle" could not have been performed. These then are some of the reasons why I believe Labour should support Israel today.

Regarding the present situation. It is clear that the situation in the Middle-East is still difficult and complicated. There are hopeful signs, although these should not be over-estimated. The starting point is surely the resolution adopted unanimously at the United Nations last November 22nd. This resolution can mean many things, and although it urges the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the occupied territories it also stresses sovereignty of all states in the area. The guaranteeing of freedom of navigation through international waterways, also means that the claims and rights of Israel are guaranteed within the resolution. The joint communique of President Nasser and the Soviet leaders following President Nasser's recent visits to Moscow also stressed the need for a political settlement of the Middle-East dispute. I personally hope that the mission of Dr. Gunner Jarring will be successful. Not to get a so-called agreement, imposed on the countries of the Middle-East, but to at least get them talking together. To act as the go-between. I believe in this situation that is the only useful role that the U.N. can play. *I agree with Paul Johnson's view, expressed in the New Statesman, that the important thing is for the Arab States to sit down with Israel, around the same table.* This up to now the Arab States refuse to do. "Once they change it (i.e. their policy of refusing to sit down with Israel) all the problems, from refugees to frontiers can be rapidly resolved". Britain's efforts both in the United Nations and individually with the Arab States, should be directed towards this end. It is clear Israel will have to accept mediation at this stage, in order that she and the Arab States can talk directly. It is also clear that Israel cannot agree to a return to the pre-June 1967 days. Their demand to live in peace is fully justified. It is the responsibility of British Labour, and the Labour Government in particular, to ensure that this happens. I believe Labour's attitude should be determined by the resolution passed by the Socialist International as far back as July 1957 and I will conclude by quoting it in full.

"The Congress of the Socialist International views with concern the continued tension in the Middle East, which prevents the social and economic developments of the area and endangers the cause of

world peace.

The Congress believes that it is essential to deal with the fundamental causes of conflicts and instability in the Middle East, notably:

1. The intervention of the Great Powers in the area by the supply of arms to the Arab States, thus encouraging an arms race.
2. The low standard of life of the region existing side by side with great natural resources.
3. The weakness of the progressive forces in the Arab world.
4. The obstinate refusal of the governments of the Arab States to give up their intransigent belligerence against Israel.

The Congress of the Socialist International reiterates its policy for the need for a concerted effort to bring the Arab States and Israel to direct peace negotiations—without prior conditions, to either side—with a view to ending the state of war and to reaching a settlement based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states concerned. The Congress declares that free passage for ships of all nations—including Israel—through the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of Akaba must be guaranteed by the United Nations”.

These then should be the principles upon which Labour's policy must be based. This is not to reject genuine Arab nationalism, which can and should be a progressive force for good. Actually, once the progressive forces in Israel and the Arab world work together, the Middle East will only have peace, but by their joint efforts could be a wonderful example to the whole world.

ISRAEL'S UNCEASING EFFORTS FOR PEACE

IAN MIKARDO, M.P.

ISRAEL IS TWENTY years old; but the desire for a Jewish State is much older than that: it was over seventy years ago that the early settlers returned to Palestine to till the land and exploit no man. The connection between the Jewish people and their ancient homeland was never severed throughout their history. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 gave the Zionist movement and the people in Palestine, as it then was, a basis on which to build. Hitler's holocaust of six million Jews accelerated the pace of settlement.

From the beginning the International Labour and Socialist movements accepted and supported the claim of the Jews to build a home of their own. As early as 1916, before the Balfour Declaration, our Labour Party gave its full support to the Jewish workers in Palestine, and in 1917 and 1918 the International Labour movement lent their support.

For the last half century a close understanding has existed between Labour in Britain and Labour in Israel. The backbone and the forerunner of the State of Israel was the Histadrut, the General Federation of Labour. The Histadrut used to be called a state within a state because it undertook many of the tasks of the State before 1948.

The Histadrut is not only a staunch defender of workers' wages and conditions; it is also the sponsor and owner of many industrial enterprises, co-operatives and public transport. Unlike Labour movements in the older industrial societies, the Histadrut had to face some unique problems. It inherited a barren land without industry and without workers, and on it erected two great achievements. First, it created a working class out of a mixed bag of immigrants of many types from many lands—from the ghettos of Europe, from the depressed areas of Morocco and Iraq and the Yemen, and from many other lands in all the continents of the Earth. And secondly, it established the substructure of a modern mixed agricultural/industrial society.

In 1948, as a result of a decision of the United Nations, Palestine was divided into a Jewish State and a Palestine Arab State. In spite

of the fact that the Arab countries have $1\frac{1}{4}$ million square miles, they would not accept the creation of a State of Israel of only 8,000 square miles.

The Israel Government pleaded with the Arabs within their borders to stay and become citizens of the new Israel. The Haifa Workers' Council, on 28th April 1948, issued a special appeal to the Arabs to stay in Israel. The Arab leaders, including the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, a close friend of Hitler, advised the Arab people to leave Israel, on the promise that the advancing Arab armies would drive the Jews into the sea, and the Arabs could then return.

Some Palestine Arabs were not deceived by this miscalculation and sensibly did not leave their homes; but the rest became the founding fathers of the refugees. Apart from this self-exile from territory allotted, in the UN resolution, to the Jewish State, the refugee problem was aggravated by Jordan's and Egypt's seizure of territories allotted to the Palestine Arab State, i.e. the West Bank and Jerusalem by Jordan and the Gaza Strip by Egypt.

Nobody doubts that the Arab refugees could have been settled if the Arab countries had not preferred to use these unfortunate people as pawns on the political chess-board. By contrast with the vast sums of money spent on arms by the Arab Governments, they have spent very little, on the refugees. The Arab oil millionaires did not contribute a mite.

The refugees in Gaza are an outstanding example. In twenty years under Egyptian rule they were provided with no industry, no work, no hope, except the hope of a Holy War against Israel. In the girls' school at Khan Yunis one can still see the anti-Jewish paintings done by the pupils, and arithmetic was taught along the lines that if you had six Jews and killed four two would remain.

By contrast with these purely negative and destructive Arab activities, Israel in the last twenty years has wrought a constructive miracle. It has emerged as the only new social-democratic country since the last World War; her population has increased from 750,000 to $2\frac{3}{4}$ million; she has fed, clothed, housed, educated, absorbed and integrated Jews from 82 different countries, including 600,000 Jewish refugees from Arab lands. The Jews of Yemen, for example, who had been third-class citizens in their own country and who had never seen an aeroplane or a machine-tool are now engineers and craftsmen in Israel.

It is no small achievement to weld so many people with diverse educational and social backgrounds into a nation in such a short space of time. Under the leadership, throughout the whole twenty years, of Labour-controlled Governments, it has fashioned the only parliamentary democracy in the Middle East. It is the only country in the region which allows communist parties (two of them!) to function. The Arabs have a fair share of seats in Parliament, and in Nazareth they are in control of the Town Council and of the Labour Council.

Israel is a land with no great poverty and no great wealth. Seventy per cent of the land is publicly owned and the Histadrut is the biggest employer of labour in the country.

In spite of shortages at home, the Israelis have done a remarkable job of giving assistance to the emergent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The pioneer character of Israel and the combination of national, co-operative and private enterprise attracted the African nations in particular, and they were eager to learn from Israel's experience. Israel invites students from the emergent countries to Israel to learn know-how in agriculture, engineering, medicine, government, community development, etc. In addition Israel sends technical advisers to countries in Asia and Africa to teach the best methods of cultivation, pest control, irrigation and the use of fertilisers. Israelis have helped to develop commercial poultry enterprises in Ghana and Nigeria, and Israeli teams have helped to establish cotton farms in the Phillipines and sugar-beet and cotton farms in Iran. They carried out training and management programmes for seamen and executives for Ghana's Black Star shipping line and for Burma's Five Star line. Solel Boneh, the construction and building division of the Histadrut, have undertaken joint ventures with governmental agencies in Kenya, Tanganyika, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana.

The Histadrut has set up and runs the Afro-Asian Institute in Haifa, whose purpose is to train co-operative and trade union leaders. Since 1961 over 1300 students from 77 countries have come to this Institute, and many of these countries have fashioned their co-operative and trade union movements on the Israel pattern.

More of this might have been done, and done better, if Israel, constantly menaced by war and harassed by infiltrators, had not been compelled to spend a large part of international income to defend itself.

Israel has much to give to the Middle East region, and Israel is prepared to give much to the poverty-stricken Arab people, once peace breaks out. This region needs its resources devoted not to munitions of war but to equipment for the war against poverty, ignorance and disease. Unhappily, all that is a pipe-dream until there is a negotiated peace. Israel's unceasing efforts to reach such a peace deserve the full support of every member of the Labour Party.

ISRAEL—THE WORLD'S MOST EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY

By GEOFFREY RHODES, M.P.

During August 1968 I was on board a ship cruising in the Eastern Mediterranean. Being both a Socialist and a Christian and not having ever visited Israel and the Holy Land before, you can imagine my delight that we were to dock at Haifa for twenty-four hours. Those fascinating hours dashing from Haifa, through Tel Aviv and on to Jerusalem and Bethlehem went far too quickly. The visit did no more than whet my appetite. I simply had to return at an early opportunity. I never expected it to come so soon and at such an appropriate moment—but our Study Mission in January 1969 arrived within a few days of the latest flare-up in the Middle East situation. There had been the raid on planes at Beirut Airport within a few hours of our arriving in Tel Aviv and the world of diplomats and politicians was still involved in a very intense argument about the whole business.

I went to Israel firstly, in order to find out on the spot how the Israelis saw the present political and military situation in the Middle East and secondly, to see how a social democracy worked in practice. We had ample opportunity during our visit to do both.

We found Israel to be in a very sensitive mood. The United Nations had firmly condemned the Beirut raid and the Pope had joined in the anti-Israeli criticisms. Israelis took the view that the world was misjudging the real nature of the crisis in the Middle East and that on second thoughts it would in time see more clearly the justification for Israel's strong line against the countries harbouring Arab terrorists. Clearly, the latter were beginning a process of putting Israel's airline El Al out of the skies and only a massive kick in the pants would stop this. It was perfectly true that the Western world was more sympathetic to Lebanon than to any other Arab country, especially because of its very large Christian population and the fact that it had traditionally been less belligerent than Egypt, Jordan and Syria. So Israel took a diplomatic risk in attacking Beirut Airport, but as the Israeli Foreign Minister told us—"it is better to be alive than popular". Well, of course, I agree that posthumous popularity is somewhat useless as an objective, but we did pursue with the Israeli politicians we met how much they really



*With Mr. Kadish Luz, a member of a Kibbutz and the
Speaker of the Knesset*

cared about world opinion. After all, we were the Labour Friends of Israel. We were the very people who had the task of winning support for Israel in the Western world. I was left with the firm impression that in the long run the Israelis care a very great deal about world opinion, especially American opinion. However, in the short run Jordanian shells continued to land on their territory, terrorists shot up their aeroplanes, and the Arab military build up continued under Soviet guidance and inspiration. In such circumstances immediate physical survival loomed more significantly than subtle diplomatic niceties.

In general, we were very impressed by the calm dignity of the Israelis, even those whose villages were the victims of regular shell-fire attacks. After the Six Day War Israelis have a great confidence in their capacity to survive military attacks from their immediate neighbours. Most of all I admired the young people. Unlike so many of our younger folk at home they seemed neither frustrated nor disillusioned. They had a faith for which to fight and a pride in serving their country. What a human tragedy it is that it takes a war to bring out the best in people (as well as the worst!) whilst domestic affluence, security and peace seems to lead young people to frustrated violent demonstration. By and large I found the Israeli youth to be better behaved in public, more purposeful in their outlook and more respected by society as a whole than in any of the two dozen or so Western countries I have visited in the past two years. Whether it will remain so indefinitely nobody can say for certain, but Israel can be truly proud of its young people.

There was one odd thing I did notice, however. The youth did not seem to have so much of the deep fundamental socialist ideals of their fathers and founders of the State of Israel. We met a lot of middle-aged pioneers in the Histadrut, Knesset and Labour Councils up and down the country. They were satisfied about the rate of socialist development. The massive influence of socialists in local and central government, the kibbutzim and moshavim in agriculture, the socialised industrial, commercial and other public services—all

these things made us rather envious. As a social democracy, Israel leaves the U.K. (and Sweden) a long way behind. Indeed, Israel is undoubtedly the most effective social democracy in the whole world. And yet I was left with one lingering doubt. Capitalistic penetration of Israel has now reached quite substantial proportions. Indeed, socialist leaders we met openly welcomed this. They argued that Israel's economic survival depended upon such investment. I wonder! I visited several Co-operative wholesale and retail trading organisations and although they were very successful I could see the effects of capitalist penetration in these fields. Assuming that Israel will remain outside the Soviet camp (and, except by military conquest, this is as certain as anything ever can be in politics) then it follows that Israel must be heavily dependent upon the international commercial goodwill of predominantly capitalist countries. In this respect she is in exactly the same position as we are in the U.K. Israel has the additional complication that she is surrounded by hostile neighbours. But no socialist can be happy if the proportion of private to social enterprise in Israel begins to swing in the former's favour. I suspect that the Histadrut leaders were a little more worried about this possibility than they allowed themselves to show to us.

Two final impressions are worth recalling. One cannot leave Israel without feeling enormous respect for the way the Israelis have turned deserts into prosperous farms—a remarkable human achievement, helped no doubt by the extraordinarily high intelligence of most of the ordinary farmworkers we had the privilege to meet. I also admired the way that so many leading politicians went back to their kibbutzim at the weekends to mix with ordinary people and do down to earth humdrum work. I saw Cabinet Ministers actually doing a manual job and serving behind a bar—done quite naturally and not as part of an act. Maybe our own Ministers could do with a little more of this kind of approach! I hope that Israeli M.P.'s will soon adopt the constituency system (it is under active discussion at the moment), but in spite of the fact that at present Members of the Knesset are elected on a national list without a specific area to represent, they seemed to me to have roots among the people far deeper than the average M.P. at home. Perhaps the Knesset could "do with more young blood", as it was put to me by one younger Israeli, but if that happens I hope and pray that they will be as strong in their socialist faith as some of the veterans who have gone before them.

I left with very happy memories of Israel—a truly beautiful country with magnificent scenery! I think that Jerusalem viewed from the top of the Mount of Olives is the most impressive sight of a city I have ever seen throughout the whole world. But, most of all, the people were as impressive as the scenery. I suspect it will not be long before I am drawn back once again to this social democratic community. They have such an infectious enthusiasm for life.

A SENSE OF WELLBEING

By DENIS COE,

'You are only staying 10 days in our country?' observed the wife of a farmer who was showing us round a moshav. 'It is too short!'

I am reminded of this reaction as I try to set down my impressions of our visit. It was indeed 'too short' to make authoritative judgments of life in Israel. What I write must necessarily be fleeting impressions yet, like the experienced schoolmaster going to a new school for the first time and being able to sense an atmosphere of well-being or otherwise, so on this my first visit to Israel I think a similar sensing of atmosphere was possible; especially as I am an ex-schoolmaster!

Our hosts, the Histadrut, certainly gave us an opportunity to sample that atmosphere: Tel Aviv, Haifa, Acre, Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Beersheba; from coastal plain to the hills, from Dead Sea to desert; meetings, sightseeing and discussions often far into the night; 10 days packed with a veritable host of impressions which I am still sorting out.

As the picture emerges I want to look at the sense of wellbeing which I felt and I think that I can best describe it in social, economic and national terms.

Social Well-being

Visitors to Israel must be immediately impressed by the friendliness and comradeship of the Israeli people. It is combined with an absence of the artificial class barriers that so often bedevil relationships in this country and I found it very refreshing.

In the light of the current menacing situation in the Middle East one might have supposed that the morale of the Israeli people would be showing signs of strain. I certainly discovered little evidence of this. Indeed there was a seemingly aggressive confidence in themselves which no doubt accounted for their high morale and complete lack of fear. All this is immensely impressive. My only concern is whether the Israeli people are in danger of increasingly considering themselves alone in the world and that therefore part of this high morale could conceivably be interpreted in the light of their feeling of isolation and the need to be united amongst themselves. In view of their past and present history I can fully understand, and would greatly sympathise with, this feeling of isolation, but if I am right in this analysis it gives

me some cause for concern. The Israelis have many friends in this country and elsewhere but I would accept that it is the duty of those friends to give tangible evidence of it.

If I may return to our visit to the moshav, whatever slight concern I might have about part of the reason for the high morale of the Israelis there could be no mistaking the sense of contentment of these collective farmers. It made a deep impression on all our party.

Economic Well-being

I confess that I was surprised to see such extensive evidence of industrial expansion in Israel; one's traditional conception of the country is that of an agricultural society. I am glad to see the important part which the Histadrut, The Federation of Labour is playing in the development of industry in Israel. For example, it controls 38 per cent of the construction industry; the biggest industrial concern, Koor, and the two major transport companies. Unlike the trade union movement in this country it combines the traditional functions of bargaining and concern for members' welfare with a host of social, educational and managerial activities. I found this socialist conception of the role of labour very challenging and it occurred to me that the British Labour movement would be well advised to study the way in which the Histadrut has come to play such a significant part in the fabric of Israeli society.

Turning to the place of agriculture in the economy of Israel I was very eager to learn about the Kibbutz movement during our visit.

We were fortunate to have an explanation of the philosophy behind this movement by Mr. Yigal Allon whilst visiting the Deputy Prime Minister's own kibbutz at Ginnossar. As the movement has spread so the need for co-operation on a national basis has grown up amongst



Aharon Becker, M.K., Secretary General of Histadrut in 1969, meets the mission

the kibbutzim. This considerable centralisation of buying and selling has undoubtedly enabled the movement to maintain its vital role in the Israeli economy. Many people pointed out to us that this was a crucial period for the Kibbutz movement. Young people who have been brought up on a kibbutz are now leaving for national service and after this period away from the corporate life of their village there is considerable speculation whether they will return in sufficient numbers to maintain the vitality of the Kibbutz movement. Certainly the young people on the kibbutzim are demanding equal educational opportunities with youngsters in the towns. We saw how this was manifesting itself in joint facilities for secondary education between neighbouring kibbutzim and the desire to enter national examinations rather than accepting the educational certificates given on the kibbutz.

These are the signs of a movement adapting to a changing Israel. And, as at the moshav, there was no mistaking the quality of the people who embrace the kibbutz philosophy. It is very noticeable how many leaders in Israel are kibbutzniks and there is no denying that the contribution of the kibbutzim to the economic well-being of Israel is a very high one. They are politicians and soldiers.

National Well-being

I have tried to indicate in this short assessment how impressed I was by the people of Israel. This was reinforced by the quality of their leaders. We were privileged to meet many of them and I particularly liked the blend of confidence and self-criticism which they displayed. For me they contributed greatly to the sense of national wellbeing which I experienced.

Their commitment to a social democracy is fundamental to their way of life and I felt that the leaders to whom we spoke are anxious to convey evidence of this commitment to the rest of the world. This is why they rightly lay stress on the work of the Afro-Asian Institute in Tel Aviv, an outward-looking institution which is already a great force for good in Africa and elsewhere. They point to the role played by Arab minorities in Israel, to the examples of participation in Israeli life and to the educational opportunities available at the schools and universities.

Above all they point to their own Knesset, a parliamentary building of great splendour and beauty where they have established the centre of their parliamentary democracy.

It is here that Israel's leaders demonstrate their claim to the world that this 20-year-old state has a right not only to exist but to prosper in an area which for too long has been poisoned by hate and mistrust.

I end as I began by referring to the wife of the moshav farmer. As we boarded the bus to leave her village she said to me, 'Come back to Israel soon.' After such a rewarding visit I hope that this may indeed be possible.

THREE BLADES OF GRASS

By LAURIE PAVITT, M.P.

Socialists all over the world spend a good deal of their lives trying to make two blades of grass where only one grew previously. Even in the briefest of visits, to see the way in which Socialists and Co-operators in Israel make three blades grow where previously there existed an arid and harsh desert remains an inspiration long after the return to Britain and the return to the problems which face Labour M.P.'s in a pre-election year.

Admiration is mixed with a little envy. The Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Rochdale Pioneers are now legends; the folk heroes of our history. In Israel, their pioneers are now. And to a Labour M.P. trying to help in the building of a New Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land it looks almost attractive to start with bare land and a clear vista rather than the demolition of all those dark satanic mills.

Of course Israel is full of problems. Of course, they have their disappointments as well as their achievements. But two things are outstanding: the basic sense of common purpose and unity one encounters from taxidriver, shop assistant, kibbutz and moshav members to Cabinet Ministers, and second the quality of leadership one meets in the institutions which are parallel to those with which I am familiar in Britain . . . co-operatives, trade unions, educational institutions and Parliament.

Looking back, four personalities stand out among the host of comrades we met. Aharon Becker, Yigal Allon, Abba Eban and Akiva Eger. Becker, General Secretary of the Histadrut, a trades union leader who could not divorce his practical approach to every day problems from his socialist philosophy. Allon, Deputy Prime Minister with his open necked shirt and his rubber plimsolled feet remaining firmly in the kibbutz, throwing out ideas which at times had the penetration of a search-light on a dark night. I shall never again think of the kibbutz as a rather dedicated group of hair-shirted patriots after seeing Allon demonstrate the inner comfort and mental tranquility which can come when practice and precept are harmonised. Foreign Secretary Eban? One makes contact with a brilliant mind which is the servant of broad understanding and rich humanity. And because I once spent three years as an Expert

on Co-operative Development in Asia under the U.N. Technical Assistance Programme, it was inevitable that I should find in Akiva Eger, Director of the Afro-Asian Institute a person with whom I would have much in common; but it went much further. In one hour he said more that was to the point on the developing countries and their needs, than one can read in a dozen Government reports put together.

As a Co-operator and an M.P. sponsored by the Co-operative Party I naturally paid special attention to the forms of co-operatives which are unique in the world to-day . . . the kibbutz and the moshav. There are collectives and communes elsewhere in the world which have much the same economic and social organisation, but only in Israel is the adherence and cohesion a matter of free choice. I am afraid that this rubbed in an old lesson in the co-operative handbooks: that there has to be a co-operative faith and an ideal before a co-operative society can be successful and that the higher the form and the more sophisticated its purposes, then the greater is the demand for a co-operative philosophy. It is true that there are many lessons for the developing countries to be found within the experience in Israel, but, unfortunately, I don't think that either the kibbutz or the moshav forms of co-operation are possible anywhere else but in Israel.

As we went south and visited the Negev there was a realisation of the basic struggle of man against nature which, in spite of present day anxieties, made the war and continuing struggles for survival against the hostility of Arab neighbouring countries look like a brief interlude against the background of thousands of years of human endeavour. If I am asked "What is Israel's first line of defence?" my instinctive answer would be "Trees" and I should be thinking of the rows of trees planted alongside the roads and across the countryside which we saw as we went down to Beersheba as the means of taming the hostile desert rather than the few camps I saw on the Western Bank of the Jordan to defend settlements against attack from hostile humans.

Of course we were interested in the sight-seeing opportunities given to a Christian in the Holy land. Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee. But the outdoors proved always to be far more evocative than the churches and shrines which over the last thousand years and more have been put up by different churches and sects of organised Christianity. On this Mount a sermon was preached. By this inland Sea . . . so much of the New Testament was enacted. One had a feeling of being at one with religious teaching in the countryside, and being cluttered up by man-made relics inside the churches.

But our greatest concern was for peace. I for one felt that the Foreign Secretary was absolutely right when he said Israel had



Our Hosts at Druse village of Julis

had enough of uneasy truces which left the major question of Israel's right to exist as a nation unresolved by the U.A.R. An agreement which is honoured in the spirit as well as in its written clauses is necessary not only for the three million Israelis threatened with genocide or another exodus, not only for the surrounding Arab countries where progress is held back for their ordinary citizens because of the tragic waste of resources and energy on hostilities, but it is necessary for the peace of the world. The lesson of Vietnam and the uneasy truce of 1954 is that an unresolved conflict in any part of the world, however small the country concerned, can also be a disaster for the greatest nations of the world. A nuclear age cannot afford to leave potential explosions unattended to in case chain reactions follow.

Israel is entitled to security. To live in peace. In spite of very understandable disappointments—when the chips were down Israel found herself standing alone—security and peace can only come within a much wider context than the Middle East. The Great Powers and the United States must lend strength to any settlement which is made, but in the first place, the contestants must not only negotiate, but negotiate with a genuine will towards a permanent peace.

ISRAEL: LIFE WORTH LIVING

DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH

By CHRISTOPHER SEWELL, M.A.

What follows describes the way in which some young and not so young tackle LIVING and LIFE in Israel today. These are just a few anecdotes strung together of people I met when travelling on the visit as part of the Delegation of 22 Labour Friends of Israel, superbly arranged and conducted by Sidney Goldberg. The people described are not typical. Typical are most people living in blocks of flats in Tel Aviv. Shopping at a departmental store and watching television at night. The incidents and people described are however interesting in that these concern people tackling life in a pioneer way in a pioneer country.

Israelis like to visualise their situation in terms of an ancient battle: Jewish David versus Goliath of the Phillistines subsequently known as the Palestinians.

Israel is a small country the size of Wales. Israel consists of $2\frac{3}{4}$ million Jews flanked by 80 million largely hostile Arabs in surrounding territories.

The Arabs see the Jews as heirs of Western colonial imperialism dispossessing them from their lands.

The Jews see themselves as returning home after 2,000 years of wandering. Every archaeological find confirms to them that they have been here before and indeed before anyone else.

MUSEUM PIECE

For the evidence visit the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, as I did.

Bowls, figurines, mosaics are mostly re-constituted, so these can be seen as these would have appeared thousands of years ago. So you do not have to just look at a broken fragment of pottery and learn from the descriptive label what it is supposed to be as in most museums. You see the complete figure and it has meaning.

I saw the Scrolls found in caves near the Dead Sea, telling the history of Biblical times. I saw a stone inscribed with the name of the Governor Pontius Pilate, who had erected a house in honour of the Roman Emperor Tiberias on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The small halls of the museum were bathed in dark. Only the exhibits

were cunningly floodlit in a manner to show brilliantly their shape and beauty. "This is better than the clutter of exhibits in the British Museum", I observed to Denis Coe, M.P.

"You have to remember the British Museum is much vaster and much older" he replied.

So it is, for the Israel Museum was only opened in 1965. The tour of the Museum was given life by the young attractive girl guide. She wore a smart navy blue trouser suit, had sparkling blue eyes of enthusiasm. Her English flowed easily and naturally as did her descriptions of Israelite, Hellenistic and Roman figurines.

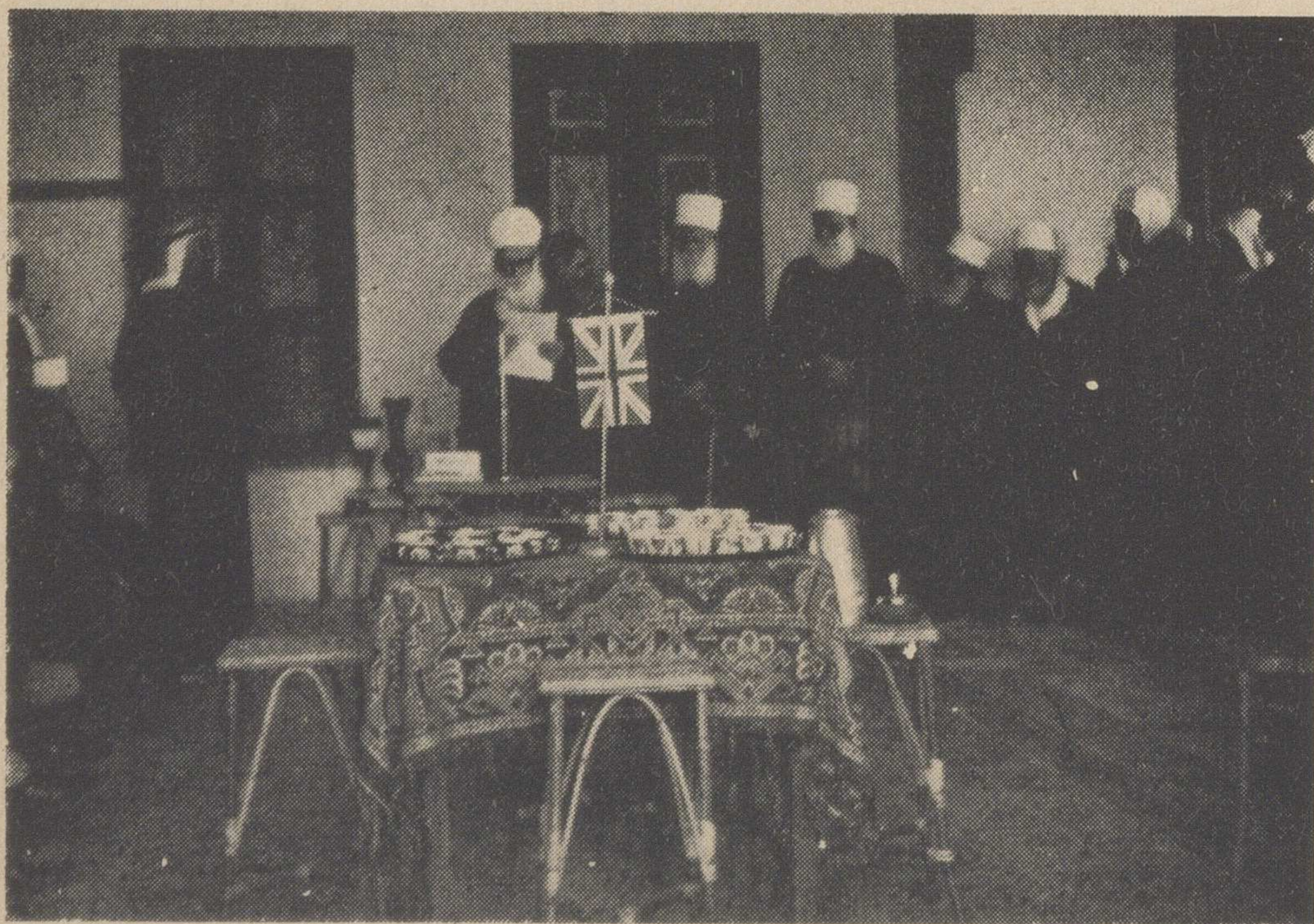
I was intrigued to know her background. She had come to Israel from Yugoslavia. She was married and had two children aged four and six. She had a degree from Jerusalem University in Arts, and was now studying for a Master's Degree in Art and Sociology.

Her knowledge of Archaeology and obvious enjoyment to the full of her life reflected well upon the opportunities available in Israel today.

TEACHERS TRIUMPHANT

I found a smiliar enthusiasm for a Life Worth Living in a young couple I met in Beersheba.

Peri Shalom and his wife Judith were 24 and 23 years old respectively. They were excited at for the first time speaking English with



An Address of welcome by the Druse religious leader at Julis

someone from England. We spent the evening talking and drinking beer together, in the bar of a club or pub in Beersheba.

Judith was auburn-haired with round blue eyes and an infectious smile. She was a most un-Jewish looking Jew. The only example I met of what I had heard of as the phenomenon of blond-native-born second generation Israelis. Her husband Peri Shalom appeared more Aryan than Jewish in appearance, slim and tall and I was not surprised to learn his parents were from Dantzig. Judith told me:

"I was born in Jerusalem. We both went to school in Netanya on the Mediterranean. But we did not meet and get to know each other until we were both in the University in Jerusalem.

Peri Shalom explained with pride:

"I am the youngest headmaster. You see that man over there with grey hair, he is one of the teachers at my school. There are 150 at this secondary commercial school. In the evening there is an evening school. So I come home about 3.30-4 p.m. and go back for an hour at 6 p.m. to see all is well for the evening school.

"I do not teach at my husband's school" explained Judith. "It would not be right. I teach mathematics at another secondary school of 1,000 pupils."

Their hours of work were comparatively short. They were young. They were together. They were successful.

KIBBUTZ YAD MORDECHAI

It is surprising that within the same small country where there is in some places inadequate care for the children of working women, there is elsewhere more than adequate care. For children growing up in kibbutz villages, the care of the community is all-embracing. So much so that some might conclude that while the women retain their rates as workers and wives, their rate as mothers to their children is rendered superfluous by the operation of the comprehensive system of child care.

The merits of the kibbutz system were enthusiastically explained by a teacher who had lived there for 30 years, when we visited kibbutz 'Yad Mordechai'. "Some American visitors have asked, do the children know their parents," he observed with a wry smile. As he said this he stood with his arm around his younger 13 year-old daughter who had just pedalled up on an expensive bicycle. There was no mistaking the family resemblance or the bonds of affection between his daughter and himself. As it was Saturday—the Shabbat—the day of worship and rest, children were with their parents. He had an elder daughter, and was for this year the headmaster of the kibbutz school.

He showed his bungalow apartment with attractive flowering shrub in the front garden. The apartment consisted of a tiny bedroom for himself and his wife, a shower and toilet. There was a kitchenette in

an alcove about the size of many cloakrooms in England, but it was pointed out that the kibbutz had a large dining room where main meals were taken.

He explained that from birth the children are cared for in children's homes. The mother brings her baby from hospital and thereafter apart from breast-feeding, the child is cared for by nurses there. I saw some of the girls' bungalow dormitories where three or four girls slept in a room, not far—50 yards or so from the school. The children eat in their own dining rooms and are cared for by kindergarten teachers and supervisors.

The children spend every evening with their parents, after the parents come home from work.

"So secure are the children in this environment", explained the teacher "that when I took my young daughter to stay with her cousins when she was five years old on a Moshav village where she was put in a room to sleep on her own, she came down in the night and could not sleep because the other children were not there."

This kibbutz earned its livelihood as an agricultural settlement growing crops and dairily produce. There were a couple of hundred inhabitants and the name 'Yad Mordecai' was taken from the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto rising of the Jews against the Nazis in the last war. A magnificent commemorative museum designed to attract tourists stood in the grounds filled with a photographic exhibition and relics of the struggles of the past. On a hillock was laid out a battle scene re-enacting the attacks on this kibbutz by the Egyptian Army in 1948. Dummy figures of Egyptian soldiers and a tank were seen advancing towards the trenches at the top of the hillock. From a tree above a loudspeaker gave forth in Hebrew and then in English, in soft reassuring woman's voice an account of the battle. Women and children had been evacuated with the exception of one woman who stayed and 50 members of the kibbutz held at bay some 500 Egyptian soldiers for a couple of weeks. Until completely surrounded, the defenders, many of them refugees from Poland, slipped through enemy lines in the areas, in the dark, early one morning. The kibbutz was then occupied by the Egyptians until re-captured some months later.

GENERAL ALLON AT KIBBUTZ NOF GINOSSAR

Further explanation of how a kibbutz works was given by General Yigal Allon, Deputy Prime Minister. We met him in the Motel at Nof Ginossar. The surroundings were lush. On one side of the Motel was a plantation with 6 foot high banana plants laden with green bananas and on the other side rushes rustled in the evening breeze alongside the Sea of Galilee.

Tourism had been adopted as economic diversification by this kibbutz. The verandah rooms were each equipped with air-condition-

ing bathroom and toilet and superb view of growing bananas outside the window.

Yigal Allon was tall and spare with a young relaxed look that could have made him 30 rather than in his early 50's. Although it was late on a Friday evening and therefore the start of Shabbat—the Jewish Sabbath—he wore sports shirt without tie and casual jacket. He was himself a member of the kibbutz that ran the Motel and was on holiday from his Ministerial duties.

He explained the set-up of the kibbutz of a couple of hundred people. The main activities were growing two crops a year of Citrus fruits, Jaffa oranges, grapefruits, bananas and dairy-farming. All adult members of the kibbutz, men and women, worked. From each according to his ability to each according to his need. There was an eight-hour working day. Money was not needed and wages were not paid. There was a communal dining room for feeding. Clothing was laundered and returned weekly. If it was appropriate that a member needed a suit to go to the city, a suit was provided. Similarly a member might be sent away to study or to learn engineering, mechanical or agricultural skills to apply for the benefit of the kibbutz on his return.

As members grew older (55 for men—50 for women) their number of working hours is gradually reduced. Not all take advantage of this privilege—many continue working a full day until the age of 65 or 70. However, the need for lighter work for the older people was one of the reasons for diversifying into the new operation of tourism. The Motel was new and modern and the standard of rooms with baths and toilets and air-conditioning and metallic mosquito-net grills on windows was up to the highest standards.

Many had come as young children 30 years ago from Germany. Recently these members of the kibbutz had been recipients of large sums of compensation from the West German Government. Capital sums of reparation, like £10,000 for each person had been received. One couple had taken their money and left the kibbutz, but all the others had given their money to the kibbutz and this had been used to build a school, a community centre and establish scholarships as a memorial.

Every Saturday night after dinner there is a meeting in the kibbutz and members listen and talk about how best to carry out the work of the kibbutz. There must be decisions about how to best allocate resources to development, residential buildings and their improvement, farm buildings, taxes, clothing, furniture, food, rest periods and so on. Someone wishing to join a kibbutz is on trial for six months or so and his personality and work contribution assessed and members then discuss his membership and vote on his admittance.

I put to him some doubts about the effect of institutionalised upbringing upon children:

“A Czech doctor friend of mine told me that in Czechoslovakia they were not reverting to the idea that a young baby should be with



The Knesset building

the mother for the first couple of years. Babies left alone all day in nurseries whilst their mothers went out to work developed into less bright and more passive children than those who had the stimulus of early contact with their mother. Have any studies been done on the kibbutz of the ideal relationship with the parents to secure the best development of the children?"

"In a kibbutz a parent can spend more undivided free time with his children, helping with homework and so on in the evening than in other circumstances" replied Yigal Allon. "I grew up not far from here, part of a large family on a farm. My parents were involved with goats that strayed, and farm-work until late at night and did not have much time for me. Now on a kibbutz from 4.30 p.m. the whole evening can be free to devote to children. And there is no slapping of children. This is forbidden."

"THEY ALSO SING"

The kibbutz is an interesting social experiment and 4 per cent of Israelis live this way.

The achievements of making the desert bloom brings its own satisfactions. In the words of Psalm 65 :

"The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

ISRAEL IMPRESSED ME

By LESLIE HUCKFIELD, M.P.

My approach is different. To my generation it has always been Israel. We have never known Palestine. We know what happened to the Jews in Germany during the War. We have seen the films about Exodus and Lawrence of Arabia. But the Hagana, the Palmach, the Stern Gang, the blowing up of the wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, the Mandate and the Balfour Declaration—these are all history to us.

Nor have we seen military service during the Mandate or at Suez, nor the years of Jewish immigration here earlier.

Familiarity with Jewish history, often founded upon personal experience of what was Palestine, is a feature which has struck me when talking to constituents. Many could tell their stories of trying to keep Jew and Arab apart, or trying to keep them together. They know the street names and quarters in Haifa and Tel Aviv. Indeed, those family-size cabs—the sharoots—are supposed to have found their name when Scottish soldiers operated a pool-fares system.

Then there was Suez in 1956. By then most of us had started to think. For me, the whole thing was brought vividly into focus, when at the time of the Anglo-French landings, we were in the wilds of Pembrokeshire under canvas as part of the School Cadet Force activities. A rumour that we were at war with Egypt went like a whirlwind round the tent-lines. A few days later, tanks and jeeps were seen in desert camouflage colours. But it all seemed to die down again. All we got was petrol rationing and occasionally Nasser came on television. But he had done it—got the Suez Canal and British troops were finally moving out.

We seemed to forget the Middle East for a while—until it all flared up in the headlines during the Six Day War. The superb efficiency of the Israeli Air Force. The sudden occupation of so much land. The conquering of the Golan Heights. And then the aftermath, with the tense border situation. The terrorist raids. Athens, and then Beirut.

It was as a complete newcomer that I stepped down the gangway at Lod airport, rather taken aback by the four casual young soldiers with their machine gun in the jeep. The waiting crowds had been kept right away from the terminal building, and one wing was

being rebuilt after a fire. Things seemed a little tense. Then the hospitality started. That cup of coffee, scotch, fruit and biscuits, and the friendly welcome were the first symbols of a genuine warmth and affection that lasted the whole of our visit.

Outside an air-conditioned Leyland bus waited—owned and operated by the driver as part of the Egged Dan cooperative—and we drove off into the night along roads and past petrol stations that could have been in Mexico or southern California. We arrived at a hotel that could have been in Miami or Key Biscayne, except that you couldn't direct-dial Los Angeles, or dial the weather forecast in Montreal in four seconds flat, or get thirteen stations on the television, three of them coloured. But getting your bags carried without having to dole out an American-size tip more than made up for that.

Many of the people that we talked to were top brass or pretty near to it. They had to speak English as part of their jobs, and it was also part of that job to be aware of situations in other parts of the world. But this seemed also true with the secretary of the kibbutz or of the local Labour Council. We were dealing with a people who had an international sense of awareness, who knew of the day's debates in the Knesset, and above all had a sense of mission and a sense of purpose.

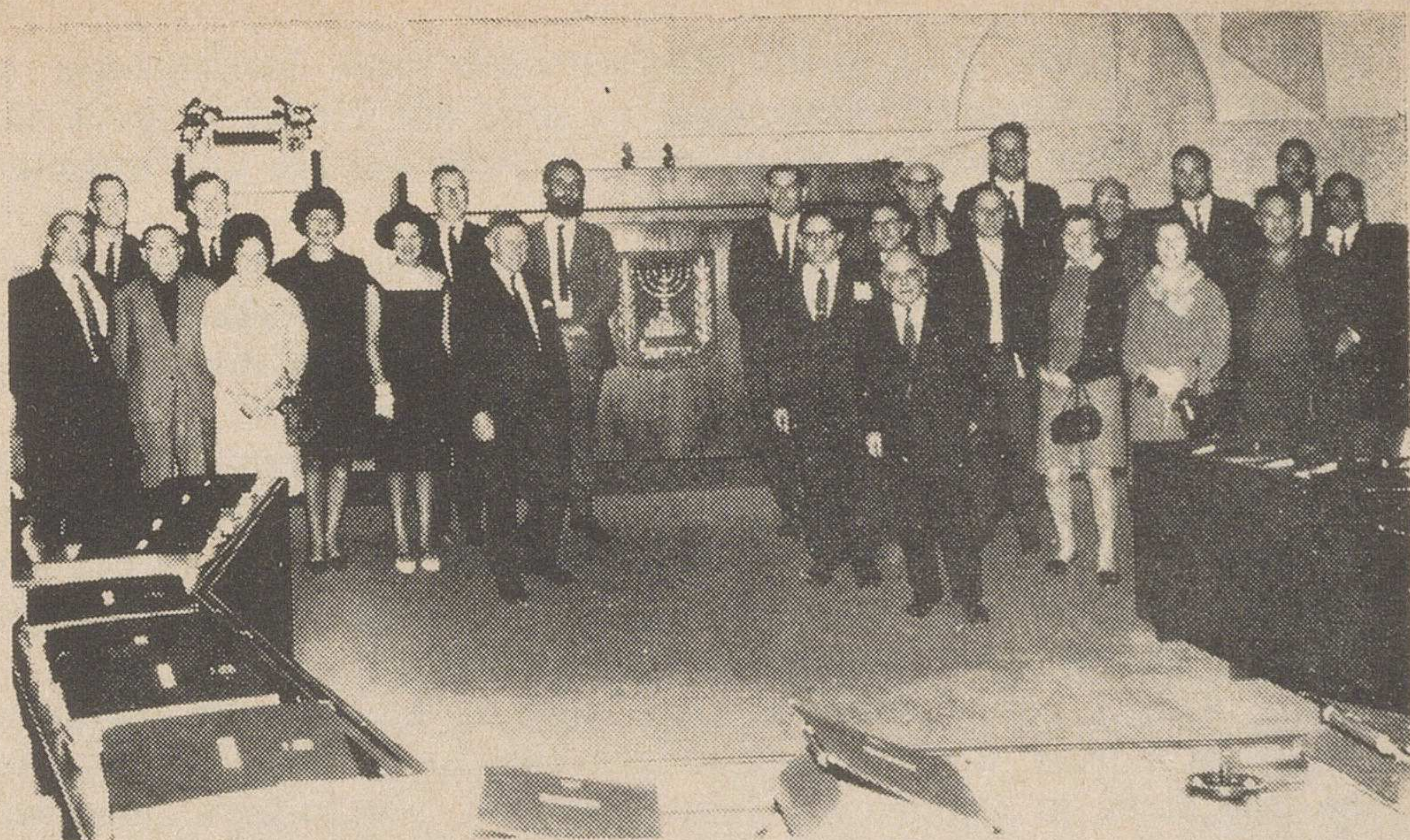
They are a young nation and a young people, with an elite based not upon money or privilege, but upon living upon a kibbutz and returning to it each weekend. The guide at the Knesset points out the Cabinet members who come from kibbutzim, and you are proudly invited to come along and see for yourself. Founded because young immigrant farmers had little money to start themselves, the whole kibbutz movement was to me an example of living socialism, and above all, voluntary socialism. There were no directives about how much produce you could keep for yourself, and you had a say in how much time you wanted to spend working.

And the young people have stayed. One would think that the tempting nightlife of Haifa and Tel Aviv would have torn them away from at least those shell-worn settlements on the border, but the reverse seems to be the result. There is a new determination to found kibbutzim, even on the Golan Heights.

We could learn much from this worker-participation, and the Afro-Asian Institute in Tel Aviv is already making a fine contribution to developing nations by sharing ideas and thoughts about the whole movement with the peoples of India and Africa.

So also with the moshavim, which differ from the kibbutzim in ownership of property and equipment, which remains with the individual farmer and not with the community.

It could well be that these types of settlement could be the most purposeful contribution made by a western-oriented nation to the developing countries, for such collective settlements are able to



Budget Day in the Knesset. Before the speakers rostrum

withstand the pressures of social and technological change better than anything we have in Europe or North America. The need of India and many African countries, whether we argue along the lines of pure international free trade theory, or more simply in terms of getting people off the land and into industry, is to establish the type of community that can withstand the pressures that will be generated by economic growth.

Welsh mining villages stand gaunt and grey after the pit has closed. Whole steel towns in the Lake District mourn the closure of the local plant. How much better to run the factories, the plants and the farms yourselves and plan ahead because you can see things coming. This is not to say that the kibbutz could cope with the technological economies of scale and specialisation and division of labour that is typical of a European carplant or will be typical of the British Steel Corporation, but with the developing world, where such economies of scale are still to come, and "merger madness" is years away, the kibbutz or the moshav seems eminently appropriate.

The Histadrut too is an example to the world. Because it demands a share in any new manufacturing enterprise, because it represents such a high percentage (in European and North American comparison) of employed labour, and because it operates so much agriculture and industry itself, the whole movement is in a unique position to ensure that everyone gets a fair share of the cake. The get-rich-quick merchants, the speculator, and the profiteer, and racketeer and the parasites of the more developed capitalist economy are checked. Attempts are made of course to break away from all this, and many young Israelis would like to see the "stranglehold of the Histadrut" loosened. Only German trade unions with their

investment funds, and their representation and participation on boards of management come near to this, but Histadrut goes further. It is older than the State itself. It runs welfare and hospitals. It cares for the people. It is the people.

But the Kibbutzim, the moshavim and the Histadrut must all take second place in the fight for national survival. As Aaron Becker, Secretary General of the Histadrut told us, "Before thinking about our standard of living, we must think about living itself".

The roads at the weekends are dotted with a young army that goes home at the weekend. Paratroops, not even twenty, are trained to fight on three and a half hours' sleep. Every young man can find himself doing three years in uniform, and nothing, fortunately could be more different than the American Draft to Vietnam.

The Army's public relations men, used to dealing with bombs at bus stops, border shellings and sudden explosions have learnt to tell the true story in tomorrow's Jerusalem Post, not today's. That way you keep the tension down. But you can't keep the tension down on a border kibbutz, when you know that during the day the guns across the Jordan Valley are training on you, and that when it gets darker, they could start firing. You just put the children to bed in the shelter, and hope that two metres of concrete under a mound of earth will keep them safe. Above all, you just have to stick it out.

Living almost in the middle of all this are substantial Arab communities, with equal rights and opportunities. We have all read the press write-ups about the second rate living-conditions, the persecution and the careful segregation. But any visit to Nazareth, the eastern part of Jerusalem, the new University at Haifa, or Acre soon gives the lie to these stories. The Histadrut is doing its best to raise living standards throughout the country, particularly in the parts of the country that were in Arab hands before the Six Day War. And if the Arabs were so badly treated, then why is there not more underground movement or terrorist activity in these parts.

In writing all of this, I am always conscious that I have only seen the one side, especially in view of what I wrote in my first paragraphs. I am not impressed by nationalism or tribalism, whether from Cairo radio, or in the Knesset. To see the flower of any nation's youth cut off in such a way appalls me. The sooner Arab and Jew can learn to live together, the better.

But to do this, there will have to be a genuine self-sustained rate of economic growth in the Arab countries. There will have to be an increase in the standard of living, an increase in education, and above all, a genuine redistribution of wealth and power. Only when the squalor and ignorance start to disappear will people on both sides of the Jordan begin to learn about the tremendous future prospects that exist for the whole area. With the climate, the tourism, the Mediterranean fruits, and a joint effort, Israel's western orientation and commercial contacts could benefit all in the Middle East.

WORKERS' PARTICIPATION A REALITY

By RAYMOND FLETCHER, M.P.

There is a joke about me that has travelled all the way from the House of Commons to the Knesset. It is that I became a passionate friend of Israel because of the way the Israelis fought in the Six Day War and did not find out that they fought for a Jewish state until I revisited the country in January of this year.

Like most political jokes, this one has a kernel of truth in it. It is true that I am a fervent admirer of the citizen army that Israel created and that I have a happy song in my heart when democracy shows that it can fight back and win. For most of my life democracy has been beaten under by arms. Czechoslovakia, in this respect, is another chapter in the tragic story that includes Spain, Guatemala and Greece.

It is also true that I have never been a dedicated Zionist. I remember vividly the arguments I had in Haifa in 1945 with soldiers of the famous Jewish Brigade, many of whom have since become leading figures in the state that was then only a dream.

Though I was persuaded that a Jewish state had to come, I was by no means keen on the idea that most of my Jewish comrades in the international Labour movement should be drawn away from us by the magnetic attraction of the national home. Blind to race and creed myself, I could not conceive of a specifically Jewish problem that would live on after Hitler. I also feared the rise of zealotry in the new Israel. I have never had much time for zealots, particularly religious ones.

I was completely wrong in my attitudes, of course. And my recent visit, which took me into the heart of the Israeli Labour movement, removed my last, lingering misconceptions.

For the Histadruth, the only Labour organisation in the world which existed before there was much labour to organise and which had the historic task of building the state within which it was to operate, combines fervent Israeli patriotism with the kind of intelligent internationalism which Jewish socialists have always advocated and incarnated. It is unique in other ways too. In the first place, it controls a quarter of the Israeli economy and about three-quarters of the agricultural sector. It is an employer as well as an organis-

ation of the employed. This combination of functions makes it a laboratory of social experiments and has forced its leaders to become political philosophers.

To talk to Mr. Becker, its secretary-general, is a doubly rewarding experience. First of all, Histadruth's centralised bargaining system is a model that many British trade unionists have thought of as ideal for us. If the General Council of the TUC had the same powers, and performed the same functions, as the governing body of Histadruth most of the problems facing Mrs. Barbara Castle would simply not exist. There would no need for the kind of legislation, either enacted or envisaged, which has created such agonising conflicts over here.

Not that Histadruth has achieved perfection. Throughout most of our discussion, a great deal of which, I must confess, was slightly over my head, he talked of problems. This was going wrong, that had to be put right, and so on. It became quite clear that some kind of streamlining has become urgently necessary in Histadruth, and equally clear that the job of correcting its structural deficiencies could only be done democratically, and therefore painfully slowly. That it will be done, I have no doubt. Israel is the country where the impossible is turned into the actual every week.

It is Histadruth's role as employer that has raised most problems. Various patterns of what we call workers' control have been applied



A new development town

to the management of Histadruth enterprises, and none of them seems to have been completely successful. Yet they are still trying, still experimenting, and I have the feeling that they will stumble on the right answers long before we get round to asking the right questions.

I am no expert on trade unionism. The only question I asked was about Arab workers. Did they have the same rights and earn the same pay as their Jewish colleagues? They do of course, as other members of our party were able to check for themselves when they visited eastern Jerusalem.

Here, I think, Histadruth can do a necessary job better than the state itself. Israeli Arabs are equal citizens, except for the fact that they are not called up for military service. The Druse community, in particular, now enjoy a freedom denied them for centuries. They were pushed around by every conqueror who came to the Holy Land — and, it must be remembered that the Arabs came as conquerors in the first place — and now they are probably more dedicated to the defence of Israel than any other community. They are allowed to fight. They fight exceptionally well.

Yet the other Arabs lack one thing that no amount of civic effort, such as that in Haifa, for instance, can really compensate them for. It is a lack of pride. It is entirely due to the attitude of the tyrants who rule the Arab world, and rule by inflaming hatreds that should have died naturally years ago. The Arab world, in short, is a mess, politically, socially and militarily, and nobody can be proud of belonging to it in its present state.

Much is being done to bring pride back to Arabs. The marvellous Mayor of Haifa, Mr. Abba Hushi, is scouring the world for a leading Moslem scholar for his city's new university. He wants it to become a centre of Islamic studies, and if he wants it he will get what he wants.

But I think that trade unionism, Histadruth-style, will do more to weld Arab and Israeli together in the long run than anything else. There is nothing so cohesive as a common interest. British trade unionism has obliterated, in the branch meeting room, the differences between Protestant and Catholic. Israeli trade unionism is doing the same thing, and as more Arabs rise to key positions within it (as they will: as they are doing) the better for both Jew and Arab.

The Jewish state, cannot be expected to transform itself.

Israel, as one would expect, is a country in which democracy has deep roots. Where two Israelis are gathered together you have an argument. When another joins them you might get another political party. They are, without doubt, the most argumentative people on earth. As I found when I dropped into a Tel Aviv cafe one morning for a cup of coffee.

Within ten minutes I was in lively conversation, and within twenty in the middle of a lively political discussion. It is characteris-

tic of the country. As President Weizmann told President Truman, Israel has a million Presidents. This fierce democratic spirit must make life difficult for both political leaders and civil servants; but that, after all, is what democracy is all about. Our concept of democracy, incidentally, owes as much to Jerusalem as it does to Athens.

But the most encouraging discovery I made during this trip was that the Israelis are not cursed with that self-centred nationalism that is the curse of the modern world. It would be completely understandable if they were, of course. With memories of the Nazi holocaust, and with a hundred reminders a day that their neighbours are preparing for a fourth war against them, it takes an effort for an Israeli to remain an internationalist. They are making that effort.

The Afro-Asian Institute in Tel Aviv, an Histadruth creation, has trained over two thousand Africans and Asians to do what Israelis have already done — that is, turn deserts into fertile fields. Our morning at the Institute was, for me, the highlight of this trip. Not only did we get a talk that packed in more sound sense about aid to the under-developed countries than I have heard in four years of parliamentary life, but we saw the visible evidence that Israel desperately wants to share her social democracy. Since Arab rulers will not allow her to share it with Arab people . . . Need I say more? One day, I hope, there will be Arab rulers big enough to grasp with both hands, and in friendship, the comradely aid that is now going out to Asia and Africa, aid that Israel certainly cannot afford but feels morally obliged to give.

There are a thousand things wrong with Israel, and Israelis will talk about them at the tops of their voices. But there is one thing supremely right. This is a land dedicated to freedom.

The ignorant young demagogues of the New Left, who echo the hate-charged slogans of Al Fatah, contribute nothing to socialism except loud, hysterical noises. Yet such slogans as they use that have retained their validity—"worker's control", "people's participation"—are being translated into reality in Israel, and only in Israel. I regard Israel, as I told Mr. Abba Eban, as an outpost of the international Labour movement. It is for that reason that I defend it so fiercely in the only way I can. I defend the branches of my own union in the same way and for the same reason.

ISRAEL RE-VISITED

By ALAN FITCH, M.P.

My first visit to Israel was in October 1966. It was without exception the most interesting country that I have ever visited. Since then I have looked forward with more than the usual eagerness to the possibility of another visit. The opportunity came, and a few minutes before midnight on 2nd January we landed at Lod Airport. This was the Israel of the post Six Day War. Had we arrived at a huge armed camp, a land of parading soldiers, of bugle blowing and drum beating?—not at all. There was a complete absence of military pomp and show. One army truck moved slowly round the perimeter of the airport, playing its searchlights on the stationary aircraft, a precaution no doubt against any saboteur who might be lurking about.

Throughout our ten-day stay, in which we travelled the whole country, with the exception of Eliat, the only evidence of unusual security precautions was the hundreds of young people, of both sexes, clad in battle dress, and the building of air raid shelters, and filling of sandbags in the border villages.

How I admire the quiet confidence of the Israelis, a confidence born of the conviction of the rightness of their cause; the defence of a classless social democratic society.

The Six Day War was a campaign in the longer war which has been going on since 1948, and there can be little doubt that considerable responsibility for the tense and unsettled state of the Middle East since then rests with the Soviet Union. This country, by its persistent hostility to Israel, and by the continuing re-armament of U.A.R., Syria and other Arab countries, has been encouraging directly, or indirectly, the Arab rulers to hope that they can get back everything without modifying in any substantial manner their 20 year old policies of belligerence against Israel.

We had a two hour talk with the Foreign Minister of Israel Abba Eban, and the gist of his talk with us was that a negotiated settlement between the Arab countries and Israel was the only way to peace. A settlement imposed by outside powers would fail.

The Government of Israel contends that the Security Council resolution of 22 November, 1967 is not "self-implementary" but provides for a number of principles which should serve as guidelines in negotiations between the parties themselves. It furthermore

insists that no withdrawal from occupied territories can take place, nor is it provided for in the Security Council resolution, without a readiness on the part of the Arab countries to terminate their 20 years of belligerence and to conclude a peace treaty.

It is fair to say that Israel's stand is largely borne out by a close examination of the resolution, as well as by a more general consideration of fairness.

My article on Israel would not be complete without some reference to Histadrut.

Since my last visit in October 1966 this organisation has grown in numbers, and its influence among the Arab workers has increased considerably.

I may be criticised for calling it "a state within a state", but I believe it is a quite apt description considering its multifarious activities.

Its General Secretary is Aaron Becker, a smallish man, of boundless energy and considerable organising ability. Histadrut was formed in 1920 when Palestine was under a British Mandate. It could be said that the organisation preceded the organised. It created a working class. The economic and political circumstances under which this movement grew up were radically different from those existing when other Labour organisations were developing, because neither a working class nor a capitalist class, in the accepted sense, existed in Palestine in the 1920's.

On the one hand there was the absence of capital because of the bleak economic prospects facing any investor, and there was no working population with an established tradition of labour.

Today its functions can be divided into four categories (a) Trade Union Movement (b) Educational (c) Social Security—it has its own pension, sickness and other social insurance schemes which in our country are run by the State (d) Employer of Labour.

The fact that this organisation is both a trade union and the largest employer of labour in the country is puzzling to labour and trade union leaders from other countries. How can a worker be represented by the same organisation that employs them? Does this smack of the Corporate State? Let me dispel any such idea. There is no similarity between this organisation and any to be found in the Corporate State, whether fascist or communist. This is a completely democratic organisation, free from state control or interference.

It is clear to me that Soviet policy everywhere in the world is based on an imperialist concept rather than a socialist concept. Otherwise how can they support despotic and feudal regimes against the only social democratic state in the Middle East, and the only one, ironically enough, which allows its own Communist Party full democratic rights.

It should be more generally known that the United Arab Republic,

Syria, Algeria and Iraq were among the very few countries in the world outside the Warsaw Pact area which expressed support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. I got the impression, talking to some Israeli political leaders, that they were unduly pessimistic about being left to "go it alone" by Western powers. This is understandable after the French ban on spare parts for the aircraft which they have supplied to Israel, but the Israelis should not judge the perhaps too hasty reaction of some governments to the Beirut raid as being the reaction of ordinary people in the Western world. This is not my experience after many conversations with ordinary people in England, and with influential political leaders in the Council of Europe. I find a deep respect among people generally for the efficient and competent way in which they have built a state out of sand and rock, and an understanding of their difficulties.

There is, however, another reason, and perhaps the most important one, why Israel should not feel deserted by the West, and that is the self interest of the Western Powers themselves, with the possible exception of France whose policies seem to get more incomprehensible the older the General gets. I am referring to the common interest we in the West share with Israel about the build-up of Soviet forces in the Mediterranean.

Considerable concern has been shown by the Soviet penetration into the Middle East, but not so much has been heard of their vulnerability. The Six Day War was certainly a set-back for them, when a major part of the huge Soviet investment in the form of military equipment in the U.A.R. was wiped out in a few days, and in view of this, they cannot have high hopes even with the massive infusion of arms and advisers to recuperate their losses, hence the persistent attempts by the Soviet to put pressure on Israel to withdraw to the pre-June positions. The present Soviet peace offensive is based, I think, on the view that the Arab States are incapable of winning a military victory, and therefore an attempt must be made to come to an understanding with the West of the kind advocated by General de Gaulle. Russia is particularly interested in coming to an understanding with the United States, which would force Israel back to her previous frontiers. If this could be done the Soviet Union would maintain its prestige and power in the Middle East.

The Economic Situation

The economic problems and difficulties facing Israel are not unlike those facing our own country. This is rather surprising when one considers the different industrial background of the two countries. An inflationary situation exists there with the inevitable wages-prices spiral. However, the trade unions have adopted a more flexible and certainly a more realistic attitude than some of our trade unions to this problem. They have accepted their Govern-

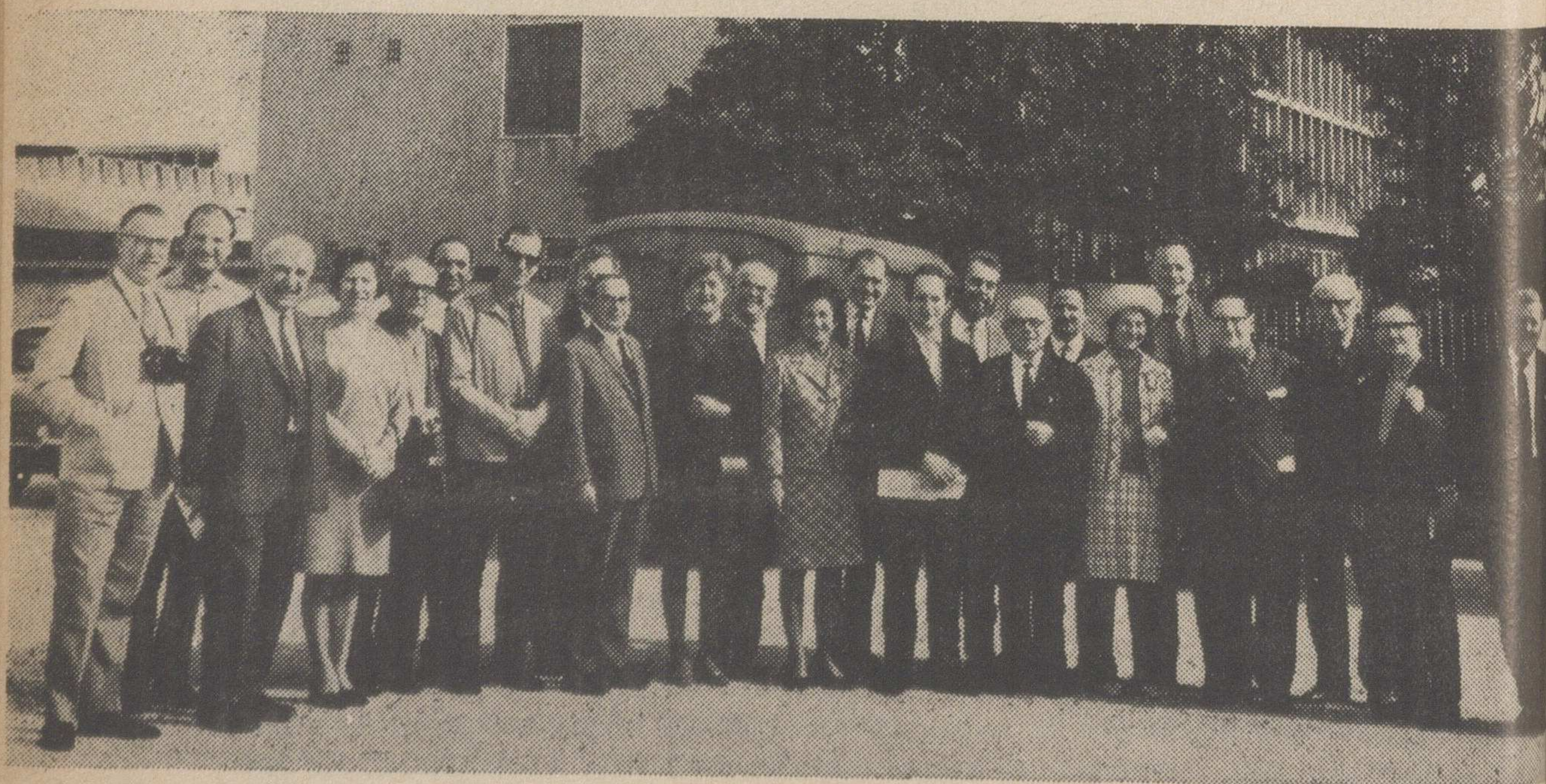
ment's incomes policy, which involves a complete freeze of incomes for one year, except for certain productivity agreements, because as a young trade union movement, they are not bound as our movement is to the traditional worship of the sacred cow of collective bargaining. They believe that social ownership, rather than nationalisation leads to a more successful and less bureaucratic form of social democracy. Hence, only two industries are nationalised, namely, electricity and Potash.

Roots of Israeli Social Democracy

Israel has the most classless society I have ever seen, and this springs from the Kibbutz movement, which is the moral source of Israel's social democracy. Israel has been described by one of its political leaders in a half jocular manner, as an "Asian country with European appetites and American aspirations".

What is the challenge that this country has thrown out to the Middle East? It has made democracy in a part of the world where democratic governments are non-existent, a living reality. This is the answer to those who jibe about democracy being all talk and no action. Israel has conquered part of the desert, not by force of arms, but by the planning and technical skill of free men and women.

I am not a Jew, so I am not emotionally involved with Zionism, but I am a Social Democrat, and they have made social democracy a reality. What they are building is worth defending.



Outside Histadruth Headquarters

A NEW APPROACH TO ENEMIES

By DR. MAURICE S. MILLER, M.P.

Perhaps the most astonishing feature of the contemporary scene in Israel is the atmosphere of calm which prevails over the whole country. The recent visit by a group of Labour Friends of Israel took place very shortly after the operation at Beirut Airport and in contrast with the almost hysterical reactions of condemnation (subsequently toned down) of much of the world's press, the Israelis indulged in neither wild enthusiasm nor in apologies for the action. They accepted it as a necessary measure and have come to realise that as the reasonable side in the conflict with the Arab states they must expect harsh criticism for a so-called "hard" attitude and constant pressure upon them to be the first to make concessions. The world is concerned not so much with a just solution of the problem as with the evolving of some kind of settlement before the matter escalates either in military or economic terms. If justice were the prime consideration, the obvious course would be to encourage the Arab leaders to sit down with the Israelis to negotiate a settlement. Only then could an assessment be made of the harshness or otherwise of Israel's proposals.

This then is the situation which the Israelis accept with quiet resignation. "I don't hate the Arabs," says Zvi Harmor, an official of the Israel Labour Party, "I just won't allow them to murder me and destroy my country." The absence of hatred and of desire for vengeance is in complete accord with the air of confidence and lack of tension. They have lived with a potentially violent position for so long that they have become accustomed to it and to the periodic eruptions. They are accustomed also to the accusations that they are contemptuous of the United Nations Organisation. This is far from true. In fact Israel is a member of all the U.N. Agencies and plays an active part for example in health, agricultural, economic, humanitarian and cultural matters. But she takes a realistic view of U.N.O.'s political set-up and limitations. U.N.O. has proved unable to guarantee her security and Israel does not make the mistake of imagining that it is as yet capable of fulfilling the role into which it has been thrust by its more unthinking supporters. If it were. U.N.O. would have no more enthusiastic member than Israel.

Amidst all her difficulties, the extent to which Israel is dedicated

to the social democratic aspiration is another almost incredible feature of life in the country. The kibbutzim and moshavim are thriving, Histadrut membership covers over 80% of the total working population and workers' participation in industry is not merely formal recognition of a right to consultation. Less than 10% of the land is in private hands and more than two thirds of the total production of the country is achieved by Histadrut, co-operative and nationalised means. We talked to Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon at his home kibbutz Ginossar, about recent developments there. "We found," he told us, "that mechanisation increased our efficiency in agriculture to such an extent that we had to speed up our planned industrial diversification to employ the manpower which was released." This in turn proceeded so fast that the latest commercial undertaking of the Kibbutz is a first class motel with a fine restaurant which is making a name for itself among tourists. And all this activity takes place under a system of communal co-operation where the basic socialist concept of "to each according to his needs, from each according to his ability" is carried into everyday practice. But one could be excused for thinking that the main activity in Israel is discussion. Every coffee house, every street cafe, every University campus, even every taxi and bus stop vies with the corridors of the Knesset in providing a forum for the propounding of a philosophy which is aimed at the enriching of those aspects of life not dominated by narrow materialism, all of it taking place in an atmosphere of pretty severe self-criticism with little evidence of smug complacency or exaggerated pride in Israeli achievements.

For a country which fought a successful war less than two years ago, the absence of most of the usual accompaniments of military occupation is a refreshing sign of a new approach to one's enemies. (Alas not reciprocated by the other side.) It must be the softest military occupation in history. Day to day administration goes on as before and is conducted by the Arabs on their own behalf. The occupation force consists of a few hundred soldiers whose sole concern is the maintenance of law and order. The fact that the recent grisly and brutal conduct of the Iraqis has not altered Israel's determination not to bring back the death penalty even for convicted terrorists is further evidence of the enormous contribution which this little country is making to liberal thinking in the Middle East and perhaps augurs well for the future when the ordinary Arab begins to realise that his real enemies are his leaders who are duping and exploiting him. Once he grasps this simple fact he will be well on his way to peaceful and fruitful co-existence with his Israeli brother.

Unfortunately international political manoeuvrings apply a double standard in relation to Israel. The Russians for example are having a spot of bother on their frontier with China but instead of merely



The Israel Foreign Affairs Minister Abba Eban answers questions

lodging a formal protest with the U.N. they take it upon themselves to "engage the enemy." No reasonable person would deny to Russia the right to protect her borders. If the Chinese are responsible for violations of Russian territory whether these incursions take the form of guerilla activity or raids or even frank invasion, the U.S.S.R. does not need to apologise for exercising the right to defend herself. Not that we have heard much in the way of apology from that quarter. On the contrary, the extolling of the glorious duty of every Russian to fight in the defence of his homeland is a more likely emanation from Moscow. But in Soviet eyes Israel is a different case and must be permitted neither the right to defend her own borders nor to demand effective guarantees of her security. This cynical manifestation of double standards must of course be expected when Israel's very right to exist at all as a Jewish state has not yet won unequivocal acceptance. And so she is expected to tolerate the deliberate murder of civilians, the indiscriminate shelling of settlements, cowardly attacks on her civil aircraft in foreign airports and an incessant barrage of vile threats and vicious propaganda with no redress except protest. Russia and her satellites are joined for example, by India, Pakistan and France and of course by all the Arab states in condemning Israel because she dares to lay claim to a right which they consider themselves free to claim. No amount of bleating about occupied territory should be permitted to obscure this vital issue which is the core of the whole problem . . . Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and her consequent claim to the same right of defence as any other sovereign state . . . and no opportunity should be lost to impress upon all the nations of the world that this has priority over every other complication.

FASCINATING REFLECTIONS BY MRS. MEIR
PREMIER PULLS NO PUNCHES
IN OFF THE CUFF TALKS

'Problem of the Refugees was created by the Arabs themselves'

THE RUSSIANS

There are very few countries in the East European bloc that dare to act differently from the Soviet Union, though we have trade relations with Hungary and with Rumania.

Czechoslovakia has hardened off. A year or so ago, we thought everything was on and then, of course it was all clamped down.

Until the Six-Day War we had diplomatic relations with Russia and the entire bloc. Then they all broke off diplomatic relations, with the exception of Rumania.

Yugoslavia broke immediately—Tito has to prove to himself that he is a good Communist!

With Russia, there were times when we also had trade relations. But since 1955, when they began arming Egypt, under the so-called Egyptian-Czech arms deal, we have had no trade relations.

We would like to renew diplomatic relations—we try everything but it does not come to pass.

We don't see any good reason why there shouldn't be diplomatic relations, although they were one of the elements most responsible for the Six-Day War. I think Russia was no less responsible than Nasser.

The Russians started the propaganda that we were about to attack Syria, which was a lie, of course. When Mr. Eshkol asked the Russian ambassador: 'Come, let's drive off immediately to our border with Syria and you can see for yourself that there is no preparation for war,' the ambassador refused to go.

Moscow knew that if, God forbid, he had gone up to the border, he would have seen that nothing was happening! But already the Russian arms were being packed into the Sinai Desert. We have the proof: every time we take something from the Egyptians, it is Russian!

I saw a cartoon after that radar operation and an Egyptian and Dayan are negotiating with the Russians over arms and Dayan is being asked if he would like this or that . . . (Laughter.)

ON REFUGEES

I wonder whether friends—I speak only of friends—have ever asked themselves the question: why, of all the millions of refugees there have been in the world, the only ones mentioned all the time are the Arab refugees?

I ask this not because I want to minimise in any way whatsoever the humanitarian problems connected with the Arab refugees. But this question I have never yet got an answer to.

There were millions of refugees from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India. There were, for instance, refugees that I don't feel so sorry about. These were the three million Germans from the Sudeten areas in Czechoslovakia (after World War II).

And the Czechs, to my mind rightly so, didn't want them back and they shouldn't want them back! And now they're in Germany.

Well, these three million Germans had lived in Czechoslovakia for many, many generations. I'm told that every year they get together and talk about going back to their homeland, but nobody takes it seriously and shouldn't take it seriously.

But nobody ever mentions that there were other refugees—there are the classic refugees throughout the ages, the Jews, knocking at every door. How is it that since 1948, they have just disappeared? Nobody hears anything about Jewish refugees any more.

All this is connected. The Arab refugee problem was created because our Arab neighbours refused to accept and abide by, the resolution of the United Nations of 1947, when it was decided to partition what was then Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state.

Well you don't want to be bothered with all the details—there wasn't peace at all. The day after the resolution was adopted, the trouble began.

The Arab leaders both in Palestine and from the other side of the borders began calling upon the Palestinian Arabs to leave Palestine.

Why? Because there was going to be war. Because the Arab countries did not accept the Resolution of the United Nations. So the Palestinian Arabs were told they should leave until the war is over.

Of course, they would get rid of us quickly—we were only 650,000—and then the Arabs would come back to everything that we shall have left behind. . .

Actually, any Arab who would have remained would have been considered a traitor.

And then, next May, on the 14th, war broke out officially. That Friday afternoon we declared ourselves an independent nation.

And at 12 o'clock that night the last British soldiers sailed out of Haifa, and immediately the Arabs from all the neighbouring countries descended upon us—from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. And also some soldiers from Sudan, too. According to all logic, we should have been gone in two or three days.

It was said that within 24 hours the Egyptian army would reach Tel Aviv and, according to all logic, they should have.

All that they had to do was to march through the desert, except that we had between them and us 10 or 11 little agricultural settlements, *kibbutzim* mainly.

One was my daughter's *kibbutz*. There were some 50 or 60 people in my daughter's *kibbutz* at that time. Some lived in tents, others in little wooden huts.

Nobody will ever be able to explain, because we don't understand it ourselves, how these little *kibbutzim* managed to stop the Egyptian army getting through. . .

Then, on Saturday, Tel Aviv was bombed by Egyptian planes for 12 hours.

Now, we in the Jewish community in Palestine had our troubles with the Arabs and, if you will forgive me, we couldn't always depend on the Mandatory Government to defend us. Usually they came too late, when it was all over.

So we had an illegal, underground defence movement called Haganah. What do you have in an illegal defence movement? We didn't have planes. We didn't have tanks. We didn't have helicopters. Had we these two helicopters that raided Egypt a couple of weeks ago, we would have been better off!

We had guns, hand-grenades, and that's all. So when the Egyptian planes were over Tel Aviv on the 15th of May at five o'clock in the morning, our boys were there trying to shoot them down with machine-guns!

When the war broke out, all in all, we had in the Haganah 14,000 rifles and some hand-grenades, with all the armies marching against us, with the planes and the tanks.

But we won the war and the Arabs from the other side of the borders, and the Mufti, were pleading with the Arabs—'Leave, run!'

Before independence, around Easter time, there was a clash in Haifa between the Haganah and groups of so-called volunteers that came in from Syria.

The last of the British forces were then on Mount Carmel in Haifa, and the officer in charge could see the battle below, but by that time the British didn't interfere at all. The Haganah got the upper hand and the Arabs ran.

As soon as we got the news that the battle was over, Mr. Ben-Gurion who was then only acting Prime Minister because we didn't yet have a state, called me and said: 'Go to Haifa immediately. And for one purpose. See to it that nothing should be done against the Arabs in Haifa.' (It was always a mixed city.)

'Try to convince the Arabs that they are not to run away. I hear they are going to the ports for ships to take them to Lebanon, Syria. Try to convince them to stay.'

And I did. I went down to the man who was the deputy mayor—

an Arab was mayor and the deputy mayor was a Jew. Together we went to see the Arabs.

The Arabs said: 'We know you will do nothing to harm us, but we have been told by our leaders that Haifa will be bombed, that we should leave. When it is all over, we'll come back.'

This is an example of how the refugee problem was created.

No sooner was the war over than the Israeli Cabinet met and said—we were young and foolish—we believed that now the war is over, Arabs don't like it, but now we'll have peace.

So we signed armistice agreements, according to the preamble, something very temporary which must lead to peace. This is what it says in every armistice agreement with Egypt, Lebanon and Syria.

The Iraqis didn't sign the agreement. They refused, but as they are not on our borders, that didn't matter so much, we thought. But now they have a division in Jordan.

So we said that, within a peace settlement, we would be prepared to bring back 100,000 of these refugees.

Now, in that period, there was another refugee problem. When the state of Israel was declared, there were at least 300,000 Jewish refugees, the remnants of Hitlerism—250,000 in the camps in Germany, the very camps where they saw their dearest ones put to death, and between 40,000 and 50,000 refugees that had come out of the camps, trying to

I saw them in Cyprus in November 1947. Some 50,000 men, women and children behind barbed wire all over again. Not a blade of grass. In tents. In misery. So altogether 300,000 Jewish refugees.

Five o'clock on the morning of the 15th of May: three things happened simultaneously: Egyptian planes bombed Tel Aviv; word came from President Truman that the United States recognised the state of Israel and a boat with refugees came in.

For one the refugees were not considered illegals. They came into a free state of Israel. Came home! Didn't need visas or anything else! So we had three hundred refugees. Our own.

Since then, during the years, another 700,000-750,000 Jewish refugees have arrived in Israel from Arab countries. One hundred and fifty thousand came from Iraq within ten months. Thank God for that or many of them would be hanged in the market place!

Fifty thousand from Yemen—and they came from Syria, from Egypt, from Libya. Those that came from Libya had lived in caves! Those from Yemen came with skin diseases and TB.

Not one single Yemenite woman knew how to read or write. The men knew how to read because they read the Bible.

So, we had hundreds of thousands of people on our hands, most of them without skills. From Baghdad, some were doctors, but most of the others were not farmers or factory workers.

They were illiterate. For the first time we had a problem of illiteracy! And there was no housing and no food.

I came to the Ministry of Labour in March, 1948. There were

200,000 men, women and children in camps. Very many were in tents. And in some there were two families in one tent.

It was misery. They used to get up in the morning, go to the kitchen to get their breakfast—whatever it was—come back and sit down. Their eyes had no life in them.

Nothing to do. No housing. No food. And we had a problem. But we got help—from Jews all over the world. Then the US, in March, 1949, gave us a loan of \$100 million, from the Export-Import Bank.

We had a problem. Should we take this money and import food and use it up? Or should we import as little food as possible, only that which is absolutely necessary, and, instead of buying food, we'll plant the dollar and make something grow here? So that's what we did, planted the dollar.

I don't have to tell you what an austerity programme is—in 1946 I stayed in an hotel in London and I had scrambled eggs made from egg powder.

So everything was rationed here, except bread. We got 100 grams of meat per person per month—just enough, so that you do not forget there is an item of food of that kind. Onions were rationed, tomatoes, potatoes, eggs, everything. Clothing, furniture, shoes.

But of course, the children got an egg every day, and pregnant women also got an egg every day and the rest, at best, had two eggs a week.

We shared with these immigrants that came in everything we had. I'll never forget the first group of 24 families that we took down to the Dead Sea. Twenty-four bare huts. Twenty-four families. Sand and sky! Nothing else!

Then we began creating public works, planting trees, making roads—all kinds of places.

We got help. Again from Jews and governmental loans from other countries to develop the agriculture. Now we have trouble going into the Common Market because we are an exporting country in agricultural products. Now we have problems—too much dairy produce! This is a better problem . . .

So go through the country. No children are barefoot. No one hasn't a home. We have some poor housing still. We deal with these problems. We can't do everything.

We have a little war on our hands for these last 20 years. But we have absorbed these people. They are our own, believe me.

But we had less in common with the people of the caves from Libya than the Jordanians have with the Arabs on the Western Bank and with Lebanon. The only thing we had in common with these people was that we were both Jews. We hadn't even a language in common.

In order to build houses for them, we went to the building workers' trade union and we said: 'We want workers. Each one will take a group of ten men'—of these immigrants who had never held a brick in their hands, let alone cement!

But we had to have those houses. I was Labour Minister then. You'd get 20 people in one room and they'd speak 10 or 11 languages. And there would be constant translations from one language to another.

One building worker came to me with a problem. In his group they spoke seven languages, but he knew only five!

The Arab refugees have no such problem—same language, same way of life, the people that left one side of Palestine and went to the other side, didn't come from caves and, anyway, the illiteracy was almost the same. The difference was that these were our people, these were our responsibility.

Of course, we got help, mainly from Jews all over who said: 'This is our problem. We can't leave it only to the 650,000 people in Israel.'

Then Jews began coming in from Eastern European countries from Hungary, from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Rumania. These are Jews. We have to help and we did.

About 450,000 Arab refugees had left and went over. During the years, some 50,000 came back—the reunion of families and so on. They were welcome to come back. But those Arabs on the other side are still in tents! Not all of them. Many of them are now well off in Beirut and Amman and Damascus and many went overseas.

But in the meantime, over 20 years, there are now 800,000 to 900,000 refugees. What happened to them? Why didn't King Feisal and the Arab brothers in Kuwait contribute towards the settlement of their people the moneys they've been contributing to Nasser for the war against Israel?

Hundreds of millions of dollars have been poured into these camps by the United Nations. What has happened to all that?

They used the money to feed misery because the rule was that you must not resettle the refugees. This is the ally that will go back and destroy Israel.

I shall never forget when Dr. Davis was head of UNWRA and a special committee of the United Nations was discussing the refugee problem. Dr. Davis had brought out his report and I asked him if Jordan was in need of afforestation.

'Of course,' he replied.

'Then tell me,' I asked, 'why did you not accept our offer for seedlings free of charge that we were prepared to send you, so that there would be afforestation in Jordan and the refugees would be put to work?'

He arised his hands and said: 'Oh no! Not I!'

'What's wrong with it?' I asked in surprise.

He replied: 'If I should accept this offer, I would not be able to go back to Beirut!'

So the Arabs refused to put these people to work, and wanted them to remain in the camps.

THE WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN

The policy of the Israel Government has been from the beginning that so long as there is no peace, we are responsible for everybody who lives there—for schooling, health, for work.

The unskilled worker under Hussein got about three and a half pounds (Jordanian) a day. Now 20,000 of these people are working on our side and we immediately established that their wages would be identical with those of the Israelis.

They come also from the camps—and from the Gaza Strip, too. In the first place, we raised the wages in Gaza and the Western Bank. In addition, they still get their UNRWA rations.

So we said to ourselves that we've got to do something to bring development to these areas. In agriculture, especially, it's fantastic what's been done on the Western Bank, which is heartbreaking in a way. If it can be done now, why wasn't it done for 20 years? We have increased their crops, doubling and tripling them.

And the Ministry gets together every two months, with the farmers in study groups discussing their problems. And we've tried and have plans for industrial development also. And housing, for we want to do away with these camps.

We can't solve the refugee problem—it's an impossible problem for ourselves to solve. But in the meantime, so long as these people are under our jurisdiction, we want to put up some housing near the camps. Or to make out of the camps something that human beings can live in.

It's not simple because when the Israel Public Works Department decided to pave a road in the vicinity of Gaza and people from the refugee camps were working on it, and there was only one Jew in charge, the next thing that happens is that he has 16 bullets in his body.

And another Israeli opened up something in Gaza which also created work for the local population and he was killed. So it's not simple.

But we don't give up. We're trying. Again I say that we cannot solve the refugee problem. But for those people who are under our jurisdiction, refugees or no refugees, we feel we have got to do something ourselves, for their well-being, so long as we're the only government they can go to.

THE SIX-DAY WAR

Now, after the Six-Day War, many people don't like us. On the 30th of May, 1967, on the first, second and third of June, everybody in the world believed that this time Nasser would make it. And anybody who was not an outright anti-semitic was worried about us.

Don't forget that, between 1955 and 1967, our friends in the

Soviet Union had been pouring tanks and planes into Egypt and we didn't know, we weren't sure, that in these 11 years, they still didn't learn how to handle tanks and planes. We didn't know that some of it would come to us.

So we plead guilty. Instead of sitting in Tel Aviv and waiting for the Egyptian army to come to Tel Aviv and fight on Tel Aviv soil, we committed a crime and carried the war to them.

Everybody believed that Tel Aviv would be bombed. It was a miracle that it wasn't. This is a country of miracles, but the miracles have to be created.

The fact is that our youngsters know what they're fighting for, not fighting to take something away from anybody, or to throw the Egyptians or the Syrians into the sea. They're fighting for themselves, their families and their country.

So they fought well and the war ended as it ended.



GOLDA LISTENS TO A VOTE OF THANKS

ISRAEL COULD UPLIFT THE REGION

By HARRY BAILEY

My first visit to Israel, not knowing what to expect, a nagging feeling that we would be shown only that which the "powers that be" wanted us to see, slight fears of personal safety, but a burning desire to find out as much as possible for myself. It was in this frame of mind that I landed in Israel to be met by Television lights and the usual performance.

Then followed 10 days hard labour. If the organisers only picked out those things they wanted us to see, they tried to kill us in the process. We toured Israel from one end to the other, from the cosmopolitan Tel Aviv to the Kibbutzim, from Haifa to the Golan Heights, we talked to countless numbers of people, some in high office, some in ordinary hum-drum jobs. So far as I could see no one was prevented from talking to us. We met so many Mayors that I think I am now an honorary town-councillor. We saw new lands reclaimed from the desert, large housing estates, new factories, the contrasts between Israel and Arab lands, large shopping centres, self-contained communities and so on. Everywhere we went people wished to converse with us. Quite a memorable trip.

However, I went into Israel with quite an open mind so far as the Middle East was concerned. News back in England is very often slanted to fit people's own opinions and I was not prepared to pre-judge.

What are my conclusions therefore? Wherever we went I was impressed with the genuine desire for peace. Not peace at any price, because the Israeli's are justly proud of their land, but a peace that recognises Israel as a state, it is already a fact, but the Arab nation apparently will not accept it as a fact. Peace that will guarantee a real peace in the Middle East, and having seen some of the problems, how necessary it is for there to be a real peace in the Middle East. I think it is fair to state that Israel and Egypt are part of a struggle for power in the Middle East, and one can only hope that the Powers cancel each other out and conflict will cease.

It is impossible to forget the poignancy of the sight of children sleeping in air raid shelters in the Kibbutz. How stupid it all seems and what a waste of energy and life. From what I saw I would state that the Middle East needs Israel and if only the Arab nations would realise it, then the Israeli "know-how" could transform their arid wastes and the standard of living of the Arab people will improve beyond all recognition.

Eastern Jerusalem was similar to Cairo, touts and beggars, flies and dirt everywhere. The contrast with the conditions in Western Jerusalem was striking and indicates what could be done if only the nations could get together.

My impression from meeting the Israeli leaders was that although they genuinely desire peace, they have had "phoney" peace treaties before, and that there will have to be quite a different control of the peace before Israel will give up any occupied territories. This I can understand after visiting the border Kibbutzim.

The Israeli's will defend their lands to the last drop of blood and one must remember that the Army consists of young people and is made up of native born Israeli's, irrespective of the geographical origin of their parents. It is a young nation and acts as such, proud, sometimes arrogant, but full of a desire to develop its methods of life without outside interference.

Politically, Israel restored my waning faith in Socialism. I accept that Tel Aviv and to some extent Haifa show all the tendencies of the development of city capitalism, but when you get away from the towns, into the areas where the real spiritual strength of Israel exists, it is all based on a real Socialist philosophy. Youngsters building up their lives on communal ideas, Kibbutzim, Moshavim, Histadrut, all epitomise a different way of life. All admit to mistakes, but all are prepared to learn by their mistakes.

The Kibbutzim impressed me immensely. Here we have people who have renounced the fleshpots of our civilisation to carve their own way of life, literally out of the desert. It is exciting in its context, the people themselves are full of faith all work and share the menial tasks, the children look happy and healthy in spite of war possibilities. All share in the prosperity of the Kibbutz. I would have thought that this was practical Socialism, at least my conception of the principles of Socialism. Talking to the members of the Kibbutz we got a sense of belief, of moral purpose, of an ideal, such that I have not experienced anywhere else in the world. I suppose I could be accused of being a "starry eyed" idealist and that many things could be wrong in the Kibbutz. If so I will accept the accusation because I do not think that these people can be wrong in their approach to life and I wish there were more of them. Incidentally it was interesting to hear from the head of the Afro-Asian Institute that there are now 200 Kibbutzim in Japan !

One got the impression all the way around Israel of the sincerity of the people one talked to. In the Middle East, where women seem to be of no importance, I met Golda Meir and it seemed to me that we were back to the suffragette days. She believed in her country, and women's role of action in her country, she did not think that everything Israel had done was right, but she stressed that Israel was here to stay. So far as the refugee problem was concerned, it was her belief that the Arabs had as much responsibility as anyone for there being a

problem at all. She felt that the problem which exists was being used as a political weapon against Israel. This she sincerely believes, and having seen what is being done for refugees coming into Israel, I could believe this. The refugee problem could be solved in a very short time if the Arabs and the Israelis got together, because the Israelis have so much experience of dealing with refugees, much of it very painful, that they seem to have obtained a solution. Once again the Great Powers could solve this heartrending problem if they really wished to do so by getting an acceptance of a joint operation in the Middle East by the Arabs and the Israelis.

Talking to Arabs in the occupied areas one realises there is bitterness, but equally so the Arabs in the occupied areas have had their eyes opened as to what could happen to them by the application of common-sense between the nations. The Israelis have left the Arabs in municipal charge of the occupied territories and are slowly but surely lifting up their standard of living, without interfering with their customs or law. Bearing in mind the continuous terrorist activities I think this attitude is amazing!

Life goes on in Israel in spite of what is really continuous war. The resilience of the people is quite incredible. The build-up of arms in the Middle East (France and the Mirage Jets, Russian equipment, etc.) could bring about a change in the armaments balance there, particularly so when you realise that Israel has difficulty in obtaining arms (President Nixon's recent speech will hearten the Israelis). What is really needed is disarmament in the Middle East, because it is obvious that a war economy is straining the Israeli economy to the full. So many peaceful things have to be shelved because of this. It must be a strain on Arab economy also and heaven only knows they could put the money to better purpose, bearing in mind the standard of living of the Arabs.

Finally, to make sure that no one believes I have been subjected to an Israeli "brainwash", although why they should try to do such a thing I do not know, bearing in mind my relative insignificance, let me say this as a summing-up —

I believe that Israel could fall between two schools, between Capitalism and Socialism. The luxury of the towns in comparison with the Kibbutzim appalled me. If Israel becomes merely another capitalist controlled nation it will die, if it goes forward with the Kibbutz mentality, the faith will be so strong that it must succeed. The leadership is inclined towards a Kibbutzim philosophy, if it retains this no one can destroy the Israel nation. I believe that what I have seen in Israel, ignoring the main cities, if properly translated into action could make the Middle East a paradise and save the rest of the world from its own self-destruction.

THE AFRO-ASIAN INSTITUTE

By RODNEY BALCOMB

Israel is a country which exercises an attraction for many people, for many different reasons. It is a country which, in particular, arouses the interest of democratic Socialists everywhere, for in Israel the labour movement has played a far-reaching role in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the country which must be unique.

The Israel Labour Party has been the dominant factor in all governments of the country since 1948. The Histadrut, (General Federation of Labour) founded in the early years of this century, plays a most important role in the life of the country; not only does it strive continuously to raise the living standards and working conditions of its members (who comprise the great majority of the working population), it also provides a form of national health service covering about 80 per cent of the population, runs many industrial enterprises and has many cultural and educational activities. The **kibbutzim** play a role out of all proportion to the actual size of their membership, and appear to have come very close to achieving the Socialist ideal of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.' The **moshavim**, too, provide a good example of what can be achieved in the field of agricultural development by means of farming co-operatives.

All these examples of Socialist organisation in Israel must be of the greatest interest to Socialists everywhere, but socialism in Israel does not stop short at the frontiers of the country. True to the internationalist ideals of Socialism, Israel's Labour Movement has taken positive steps to assist the eradication of poverty, ignorance, and injustice in the developing nations of the world. This desire to contribute to the solution of the problems of under-development in the world has taken concrete form in the establishment, by the Histadrut, of the Afro-Asian Institute for Co-operative and Labour Studies.

This Institute was founded in 1960, largely as a result of the great interest which politicians, trade unionists and agriculturalists from the newly-independent developing countries had shown in Israel's development policies. Experts from many developing countries had visited Israel during the 1950's to study the organisation of **kibbutzim**, **moshavim** and the Histadrut. They were keen to learn how a strong trade union movement, producers' and consumers' co-operatives, and a rapidly expanding economy based principally on agriculture, had been built up so quickly in what was still a developing country. These visits were followed by more and more requests for information, and it was in response to this great interest that in November 1958 the

International Department of the Histadrut held its first Afro-Asian Seminar at the Histadrut's Workers' College. The sessions, which lasted for three months, were attended by 61 representatives of 17 African and Asian countries. It soon became apparent, however, that a permanent institute, with its own staff of administrators and lecturers, a more inclusive programme of studies and field work as part of the curriculum, was needed. It was in this way that the Afro-Asian Institute came to be founded by the Histadrut in 1960; it was set up because of a pressing and apparent need, not as the result of any long-preconceived plans.

The Institute does not seek to provide a blue-print for development for use in all developing countries. The most important thing the Institute tries to show, is to find a way of releasing people's own energies, to make them aware that through their own efforts they can change their conditions of life.

The Institute's study programmes are based on a number of main points.

Firstly, the Institute tries to show the need for a comprehensive approach to the problems of development, to show the inter-relation between the various aspects of development. While the aim of development policies is economic, the means of achieving this aim are often not economic, but are mainly social and human. Thus, questions of social justice, hygiene, food habits, health and education (for people of all ages, and especially for girls, the mothers of tomorrow) must be a part of any broad plan for development. With this last factor in mind, the Afro-Asian Institute tries to secure the participation of as many girl students as possible in its courses.

The Institute's study programme also stresses the need to adapt scientific and economic methods to local conditions. By way of example, attention is drawn to the development policies which the Indian government has pursued on the advice of certain economic experts. These policies, it is suggested, might well have been useful in countries like Britain and Sweden, but have been a tragedy for India. The Indian government's policy of rapid industrialisation of the towns has not been successful because the ordinary Indian cannot afford to buy industrial goods, and because Indian industrial goods are difficult to sell abroad in face of competition from the developed countries. A far better policy, it is said, and one which Israel has followed, is to channel investment to the rural areas, in order to raise the purchasing power of the population; industry can then be built up gradually, especially in the rural areas. Israel realised early the need for comprehensive regional rural planning.

The importance of co-operation as a vehicle for development is underlined, again with examples drawn from Israel's own experience. In developing countries, it is often only by co-operative enterprise that resources needed for new investment can be found, and that sufficient economies of scale can be achieved for products to sell at competitive prices.

The key to development is seen as manpower, not capital (people will be unwilling to invest capital in an area if there is no trained manpower to run the new industries) and manpower training must therefore have priority. Here again, co-operation is a good framework for the training of manpower; **kibbutzim** and **moshavim** have turned many people who were originally city-dwellers into good farmers.

The Afro-Asian Institute also teaches the important role which Labour can play in the development process through trade unionism and co-operatives. Students follow courses on the various activities of the trade union movement, and on the organisation and functioning of trade unions and co-operatives. These studies are conducted in considerable detail and, for example, the Institute provides students with annotated statutes and by-laws of co-operative enterprises and specimen contracts between Histadrut and employers' organisations. In this way, students are enabled to play an active part in the building up of trade union and co-operative organisations when they return to their own countries.

The courses provided include a considerable amount of field work, and students visit industrial enterprises and farming co-operatives and collectives, living and working for several days at a time on **moshavim** and **kibbutzim**. Visits are made to various public and official bodies and there are also cultural activities to acquaint students with the life of Israel.

So far approximately 2,000 students have passed through the Afro-Asian Institute, coming from about 80 different countries. About two-thirds of these students have been from Asia, about one-third from Africa, and also some have come from the Caribbean area and Latin America. At present 220 students attend courses (usually lasting three and a half months) at the Institute each year. Twenty regular courses and thirty special courses have been held so far at the Institute's building in Tel Aviv (courses are normally conducted in English and French) and about 15 courses have been conducted in the developing countries themselves by lecturers from the Institute. Most of the Institute's lecturers are Israelis, although there are some visiting lecturers from abroad.

A large part of the cost of running the Institute is borne by the Histadrut itself, but more than 50 per cent of the income derives from scholarships provided by foreign and international organisations. Trade union organisations, particularly in the United States, and International Trade Secretariats provide scholarships, as do UNESCO, the European Economic Community, the International Labour Organisation and the International Co-operative Alliance, to name only some of the donors. The Israel government does not contribute to the financing of the Institute except in specific cases where it asks the Institute to hold particular courses, and in certain cases where the Israeli Foreign Office helps with the expenses of individual students. The British Trades Union Congress gives four scholarships annually.

About one year before each course is due to start, the Institute fixes quotas for the various developing countries and writes to organisations in those countries, suggesting how many students it would like to have from the different fields of activity such as the Trade unions, co-operatives and so on. Before students are finally selected, they have to complete questionnaires and write essays. It is a tribute both to the efficiency of this selection process and to the quality of the education provided by the Afro-Asian Institute that many former students now occupy senior positions in their own countries in political life and in the trade union and co-operative movements.

With relatively small funds, the Afro-Asian Institute is doing work of immense value to the developing countries. Many letters from former students attest to this. A letter from a former student from Mali exemplifies this practical utility when she writes: . . . "immediately upon our return from Israel we started to put into practice the experience we acquired there. In my sector, I formed 36 peasants' co-operatives."

The importance and the significance of the work carried out by the Afro-Asian Institute is clearly very great. It is the only Institute of a highly organised Labour Movement which combines studies in co-operation and labour problems against the background of practical experience gained by that Labour Movement not only in building its own economy and society but also determining decisively the structure and the content of a young State. It makes a most valuable contribution not only to economic progress in the developing world, but also to freedom, democracy and social justice. In short, it is a most practical and effective embodiment of the ideals of Socialist internationalism.



WITH TEDDY KOLLECK, MAYOR OF JERUSALEM

A TRADE UNIONIST LOOKS AT ISRAEL

By ERNEST HAYHURST

Having heard a great deal about Israel, I looked forward to my first visit with real interest. Would it be as interesting and socially exciting as I had been led to believe or would the reality be a disappointment and fail to live up to expectation?

I need not have worried for, despite the difficult international situation, I found the country and its people just as purposeful and interesting as I could have hoped.

In the ten days I was there, along with other members of the Study Mission, I think we had a good opportunity of seeing this country of 2,800,000 people and meeting a wide variety of her people, including visits to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Jericho, Beer Sheva, Kinyat Gat, Ashkelon, the Kibbutz of Nof Ginnosar, Banias, the Golan Heights Kibbutz Beth Sara, Haifa, Nazareth and Bethlehem.

We met many of Israel's leading personalities, including the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ygal Allon, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Abba Eban, several members of the Knesset, officials of the Foreign Office and many of the ordinary citizens.

I was particularly interested in the discussions I was able to have with officials of Histadrut, who were heavily engaged in the biennial round of wage negotiations leading to a settlement of 6 per cent.—8 per cent. to be followed by a 2 per cent. cost of living increase in 1971. It was interesting to know that Histadrut were celebrating their 50th Anniversary, the union having been in existence longer than the State of Israel and having a greater proportion of the workpeople in the union than any other country.

Looking for the secret which had led to this intensive degree of organisation brought out, more clearly than I had previously appreciated, the value of Histadrut's social insurance provision which had grown up in Israel because of the circumstances in which the need for social security had to be met before provision could be made by the State. In addition there was the great value of the Histadrut Health Service, "Kupat Holim", which provides the basic health services for the vast majority of the population and which the State supplements rather than the opposite way round.

Many of us had the opportunity of visiting the Central Stores Depot of Kupat Holim, which is responsible for a substantial proportion of the basic drug requirements and essentials such as toothpaste,

and we were advised that they were increasingly able to meet their own needs, though, as a matter of economy and good business, a proportion of supplies came from abroad.

Another very interesting feature of Histadrut is the way in which it has developed industry directly for the benefit of the membership and community, and there were interesting experiments in progress to develop worker participation on a much wider scale.

One matter now giving rise to some re-thinking was the position of Histadrut in the Alignment which forms the Government, and I think we may see developments in due course to make more clear Histadrut's position as the spokesman of the working membership, though without detracting from the very important part played in the political field.

There are, of course, many problems with which Israel has to grapple, particularly the very large cost of defence which now represents 20 per cent. of the gross national product; the problem of absorbing and training the 60,000 refugees who yearly are seeking safety in Israel; the development of industry and the provision of housing to meet the demand from newcomers and to improve the housing stock.

However, all these problems are being most vigorously dealt with to such effect that the economy is developing at about 9 per cent. annually, and one cannot fail to be impressed by the energetic and thorough way in which the Alignment is dealing with these basic needs.

One too must mention the part played by the Pioneer Women, who are doing so much in the education of newcomers in the language, customs and industrial practices so that people from all parts of the world can become integrated into a real community. How one could have wished for more time to go into these matters to see how far we could use the lessons here in Britain!

The issue of national security is one topic which a visitor to Israel must, of course, expect to hear about and as our visit followed closely on the arrival of the "fishing boats" newly arrived from Cherbourg and there is great interest in this topic though the country was quite calm and quietly confident and without any sense of being dominated by the military situation. In the many talks I had with people including senior politicians, it became very clear that Israel would welcome and be ready to reach a peace agreement with her Arab neighbours and, in this respect, they would not object to the parties being brought together under the United Nations auspices or through some formula such as the "Rhodes Agreement" but there was no doubt that they would look upon the direct acceptance of such a peace treaty by her Arab neighbours as an essential to such a settlement.

Though there are differences of emphasis between various groups of opinion as to what might be conceded in return for a satisfactory peace settlement I formed the impression that Israel would be prepared to consider the withdrawal from some, at least, of the occupied terri-

tories though national security would need to have proper consideration.

In the meantime Israel felt that none of the Great Powers should interfere in the area by supplying arms so as to upset the balance of power in the area and if any were to do so Israel would need to obtain assistance from friendly countries to keep the balance.

Though the military situation had led to conscription of three years for men and twenty months for women this appeared to be readily accepted in view of the threats which continued to be made against the existence of Israel and the threats to destroy her.

Another feature of the visit had been the opportunity to visit the Afro-Asian Institute and to see how the experience of Israel in developing its economy had been made available to the under-developed countries of Africa and Asia — even the Japanese had been much interested and sent many students.

This alone could justify a full report and it was too good to know that the T.U.C. are providing scholarships which are much prized by those who benefit.

Looking back one realises that the visit had not only lived up to expectations but had left a lasting impression of the tremendous social progress being made, a sense of confidence in the future and an appreciation of the tremendous work done in absorbing refugees from abroad.

I am sure Israel has much to offer, not only to her Arab neighbours but also other under-developed countries and I look forward to watching her progress.



ABBA EBAN, FOREIGN MINISTER, EXPLAINS A POINT

A SECOND LOOK AT SOCIALIST ISRAEL

By HERBERT KEMP

Four years ago, accompanied by my colleague Mr. C. W. Fulker (Director) and Mr. R. G. Clark (Manager) plus representatives from nine European countries and Canada I visited Israel for the first time as a guest of the Citrus Marketing Board.

I was then very favourably impressed with the way the whole Labour Movement (Co-operatives, trade unions and Labour Party) worked together for the common good—and very much more so than in England.

Visits to agricultural and biological research stations, the University in Jerusalem, the huge Technicon (technical university) in Haifa, the Weizman Institute of Science, the new towns (one in a desert), the Co-operative communities (Kibbutzim) and the co-operative packing plants and marketing organisations for citrus fruits and other products all illustrated how a small nation of dedicated, capable people were making a success of living against great odds (e.g. rocky soil, water shortage, language problems and the hostility of the Arab neighbours).

I was therefore particularly pleased to have the opportunity to return to Israel in January 1970 as one of a party of 26 including my C.W.S. colleague, Harry Bailey, five M.P.s, a Regional Trade Union Official and a Lord Mayor, under the auspices of the Friends of Israel.

To some extent the itinerary was similar to that four years previously but this time Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Jericho the Knesset (Parliament), an Arab Village and the Golan Heights were added to Bersheba, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Jaffa, the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, West Jerusalem, and the impressive and deeply moving memorial to those who died in German Concentration Camps.

The most important impression I gained on this occasion was the frankness, realism and sincerity of the members of the Government. We were privileged to meet the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, who each devoted an hour to our Party and faced up to a wide range of searching questions unhesitatingly and convincingly. I heard Mrs. Golda Meir speak at Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs) in London last year and her belief in the rightness of her cause shone then as brilliantly as it did in Jerusalem. The only two women Prime Ministers in the World (Israel and India) face problems as great, if not greater, than any two of their male counterparts in other countries.

We were also privileged to meet the Military Government's

Spokesman for Judea and Samaria and he was no less frank and responsive than the leading members of the Government.

Israel is a State—a progressive, modern democratic State—and is entitled to be left in peace to build a new life for immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Far East in particular—its less than three million people are no threat to more than one hundred million Arabs except by example of what can be done to provide a civilised standard of life for all.

But the Arabs prefer to teach and preach hatred of the Jews—and use millions of pounds for anti-Israel activities whilst millions of Arabs are illiterate and live in worse than slum conditions. The Arab State and Sheiks flush with oil royalties could of course do much to improve the lot of their brother Arabs—but they prefer to live in the past and fight the progressive forces near their borders.

A particularly interesting visit was made to an Arab village—in Israel—with new houses, a new school and a new life for those obviously happy in their new surroundings.

A very disturbing experience was a visit to the Golan Heights where the Syrian army had been replaced by the Israelis. In one bunker we entered was inscribed on the wall (in Arabic) "Butcher the Jews"—so much for the claim made occasionally that Arabs desire a peaceful settlement!

The Kibbutz we visited near the Golan Heights is now being shelled from the Jordan side and we saw the children in their gas proof air raid shelters—and also the tired-looking young parents—tired because of disturbed nights—but cheerful, courageous and firm in their belief in their cause.

In East Jerusalem we saw the Jewish cemetery desecrated by the Jordanians—and on the main road outside Jerusalem, en route to Jericho we saw the flagged path to a Jordanian officer's house made of gravestones from the Jewish Cemetery. But Britain continues to welcome King Hussein!

The second major impression I received was the power of the Histadrut—a kind of combined T.U.C. Labour Party and Co-operative Union with its major influence on the State. It is this particular feature of Israel—a race of people known throughout the world for their individualism who in Israel work together collectively—which has always interested me as one interested in both economic and political organisation. It is the only country I know where rapid progress is being made towards a co-operative or Socialist Commonwealth with the full freedom of Western democracy. The East European "Socialist" states could learn much worth copying in Israel—but they prefer to support the feudal Arab States.

Israel suffers much from inflation because the never ending war must be paid for—but given peace—and the U.S.S.R. which preaches Peace more than any other country could do much to bring this about—Israel could do much to help its Arab neighbours to lift themselves out

of their medieval past.

Why should British Co-operators be interested in Israel?

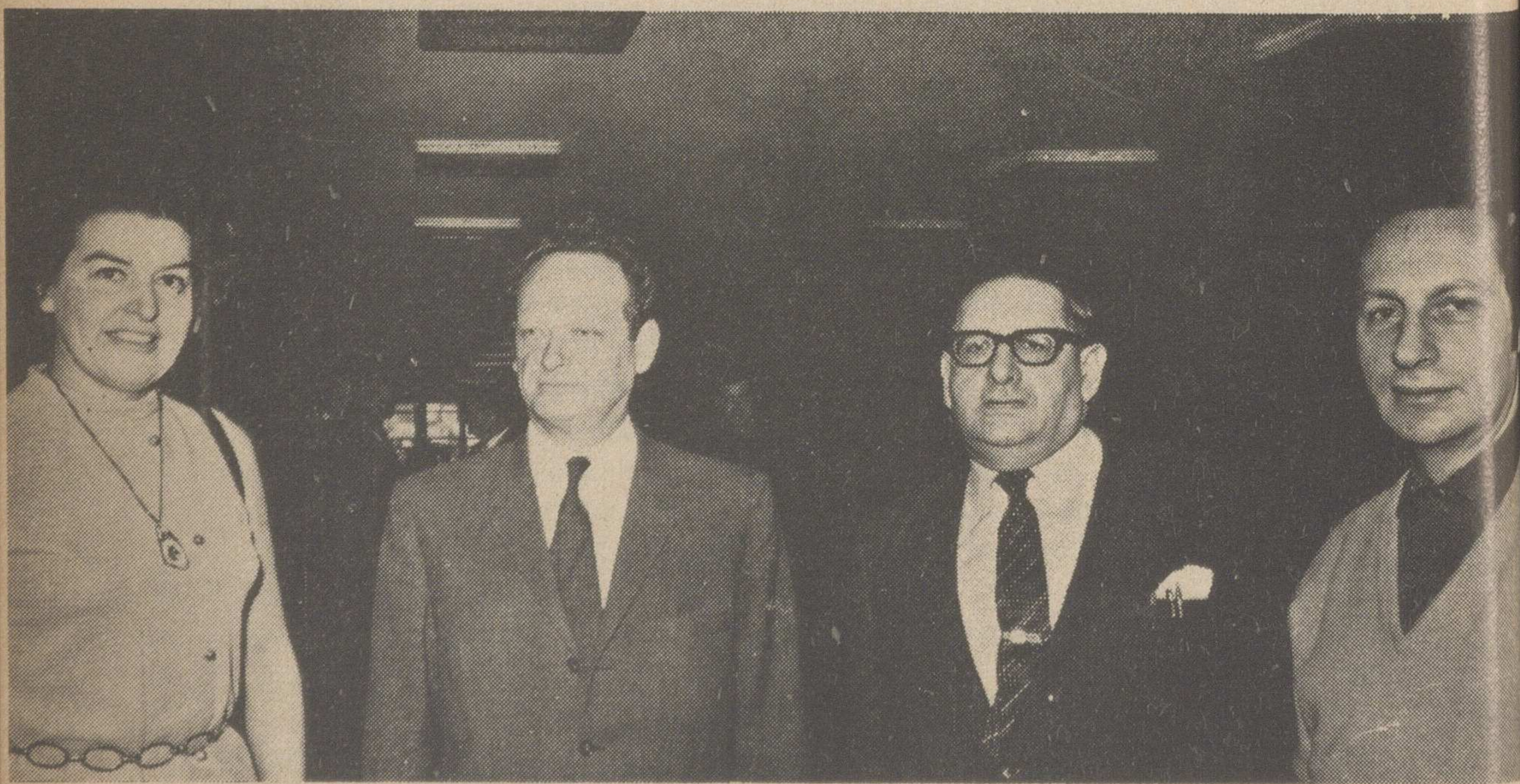
Because the Kibbutzim are in fact co-operative communities where **all** resources are pooled and equality reigns supreme; because the Israelis have a successful co-operative movement (an Israeli C.W.S. Director we met lives in a Kibbutz and lives according to Kibbutz i.e. Community, Standards—and so does the deputy Prime Minister); and because Co-operation means working together for the common good—the Israelis do just that and it is the only country I know where it happens!

We were all very interested in our visit to the Afro-Asian Institute where the Israelis are busy teaching students from many countries (including Japan) how to fight fatalism and poverty, how to accumulate and use capital, how to build democracy from the bottom, how large scale enterprise makes modernisation possible and reduces expenses of operation—and not least how, by education, to stop the exploitation of women.

The Institute also includes an increasing number of Muslem students which may yet be a bridge to the Arabs.

The Afro-Asian Institute is admitted to be an arm of foreign policy but so it is in many countries—many present-day communist leaders were trained in Moscow.

If peace can be achieved in the Middle East, Israel may yet be the yeast which leavens the lump—but if the war escalates a third world war may result—surely a good enough reason for all of us to endeavour to understand the origin, nature and extent of Middle East problems.



Left to Right: JOAN LESTOR, M.P., YGAL ALLON, M.K.,
SID GOLDBERG and DR. M. S. MILLER, M.P.

THE FIRST AND FINAL WORD: PEACE

By ARTHUR W. J. LEWIS, M.P.

I desire this article to be as honest and as factual as can possibly be, in the knowledge that the writer is a declared friend of Israel. He is also a declared friend of all the Arab States, their peoples, and the peoples of the world, convinced in the knowledge that war is harmful to all peoples and only peace can ensure progress towards the abolition of poverty, hardship and starvation throughout the world.

My visit was sponsored by the Labour Friends of Israel and I was one of a group of friends holding various official and semi-official positions in Government, Parliament, the Labour Trades Union and Co-operative Movements, Local Authorities, Medical and journalistic activities and ordinary housewives. Of course I paid my own expenses to and from Israel and express thanks to the Histadrut, our hosts whilst in Israel, for their kind hospitality.

It is not my intention to "slant" this report on what I have seen (although this could quite easily be done) as I believe that the obvious facts are much more convincing than "garnished" propaganda.

Everywhere I went (Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem (Knesset-Parliament), Bethlehem, Beersheba, Kiriat Gat, Ashkelon, Golan Heights and Haifa) and everyone I met, the first, continuing and final word was "PEACE". This came from the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, down to the most humble worker in the Kibbutz.

Without question Israel neither seeks nor desires an extension to her territories, from any of her Arab neighbours, and it both willing and most anxious to sit down, at any time, in any place, to discuss with these Arab States any and all problems, obvious and apparent, and those hidden beneath the surface. One may therefore fairly ask, well, if you say that "Israel seeks no extension of her territories", why is she still holding on to the land taken from her Arab neighbour as a result of the six-day war? A fair question, which I posed myself and to which I received a satisfactory answer. Also a visit to the Golan Heights, **without being a military expert, showed to me (and to any other unbiased person) that Israel must hold on to this territory until a permanent and stabilised peace is established.**

Israel says, Firstly we want Peace. For this the pre-requisite is

- (a) All of our neighbours to recognise the fact of our existence and that we are here to stay.
- (b) To exchange diplomatic missions with all of our neighbours.

(c) We can then meet to discuss the whole question of frontiers, borders, territories, etc., etc., and provided we can be guaranteed that the safety of our people and our country is secure from attack, then no problem is insurmountable, including the return of all disputed territories.

In my opinion such an approach and settlement would be in the best interests of Peace, the Arabs, the Jews, and all of the Middle East countries and the peoples of the world.

Then could proceed a joint attempt (the Israelis with their undoubted and proven skills, science, technological, etc., abilities, with the Arab manpower and oil revenues) to fully exploit the whole of the area to the advantage of the Middle East people in particular and the peoples of the world in general. It can be done !

The small population of Israel, against immeasurable odds, such as the influx of innumerable races of people, with their strange customs and language difficulties, who have immigrated into the country with little or no money, and skills not of the type needed in Israel, have been assimilated, retrained and have actually "Made the Desert grow". One sees whole areas of huge Forests, Orange Groves, Banana Plantations, Cucumbers, Grapefruits, Roses growing on former barren land which only contained sand dunes.

What a wonderful thing if this development could be carried out throughout the whole of the Middle East !!!

I have not dealt with the excellent Health, Insurance and Social Security schemes which were witnessed, suffice it to say that we could learn much in this country from Israel's achievements in this field.

Finally, let me say I do not wish to convey that in a 10-days tour I can claim to speak as an expert, or that I saw everything, or equally that I saw nothing wrong in the country. In fact I found several things with which I would find fault (similar faults to those I have witnessed in almost every country in the world, which I have had the benefit of visiting). Indeed, Israel has the greatest problem of all, which creates difficulties, i.e., "spending too much money and endeavour on an expensive defence economy", but given their most earnest desire of Peace, both Israel and all of her neighbouring Arab States could, within a relatively short space of time, become the show places of the world. Places where poverty, disease, ignorance, hunger and starvation could be abolished and the human personality and dignity of all men could flourish as never before. The Arabs are in fact assisting to do this in Israel, is it too much to ask that the Arabs in Arabia join in with these worthy and laudable endeavours?

HUMANITARIAN ATTITUDES

By DR. MAURICE S. MILLER, M.P.

The road from Jerusalem to Nablus winds its 45-mile way entirely through Israeli-held territory. The fields on each side of the road already show some of the benefits of Israel's agricultural advice and assistance to the Arab farmers of the West Bank. The villages are further evidence of the prosperity created by encouraging trade between Israel and the West Bank farmers. But apart from three Israeli soldiers, I saw no other signs of occupation on the journey to Nablus and back. The military presence is minimal. Instead of an iron hand and an exacting of tributes, Israel makes her presence known in the best way possible — by showing the Arabs that, for example, diversity of crops is a better proposition than relying on a single crop which if it failed spelled disaster and even if successful meant only two months' employment in the year.

But I was not bound for Nablus to look at West Bank farming with its intriguing story of successful co-operation between Arab and Jew. My journey was for an entirely different purpose. Nablus, or Shechem in Hebrew, the ancient capital of Samaria, is the site of a prison which houses among its 600 inmates a large number convicted of acts of terrorism. My mission was with them.

Accompanied by an official of the Israeli Foreign Ministry we drive up to the main gate of the prison and park our car among several others outside. The clean white-washed walls are about ten feet high and have an outgrowth of droopy barbed wire. The gate opens unceremoniously, we saunter through and are taken to the Governor's office. Governor Michael Golan has driven that morning from Beer-Sheva, interrupting his leave in order to conduct me round the prison. We sit in his office sipping sweet black coffee brought by a prisoner. The Governor is talking. "This prison", he tells us, "used to be a station of pilgrimage on the way to Mecca. It was built for this purpose by the Turks, but has been used as a prison since 1934 in the time of the British mandate. When we took it over after the 6-Day War, we found it empty of everything except records, keys and lice. The place was absolutely filthy and we had to burn all the bedding. We began our administration with a small staff of four Israelis and 20 locally-recruited Arabs. After the first week, the spokesman for the 20 Arabs came to my office and placed 50 Israeli pounds on the table in front of me. This was my "share" of their pay in gratitude for the jobs which I had given

them; a standard practice during the Jordanian administration. My refusal to accept the money was met with astonishment which gave way to an assurance that it was all they could afford. They thought I was dissatisfied with the amount!"

The Governor goes on to explain that most of the prisoners work. About 350 are employed in three shifts in the factory which manufactures plastic bags, about 60 do construction work and the rest are engaged in services such as cleaning, cooking, orderly duties, laundry, etc. Every working prisoner receives 10 cigarettes a day as "pay". The few who do no work get four cigarettes a day. All are permitted to write two letters and four post cards per month and can receive any amount of correspondence from outside. Some of this comes from Cairo, Amman and Damascus and is not interfered with in any way. The prisoners can have a monthly visit from their families, who bring them fruit, cigarettes and biscuits.

I ask Governor Golan about accusations of cruelty to the prisoners. He shows no sign of annoyance or impatience as he replies. "We treat prisoners as human beings in spite of the crimes against innocent people for which many of them are sentenced. The guards carry no weapons of any kind. No guns, no sticks, nothing. You can see for yourself. I have been in charge of this prison since we took it over and I can say without fear of contradiction that not one prisoner has ever been ill-treated". "Are they allowed to complain?" I ask him. "Sure, why not?" is his response. "They have a complaints and suggestions box directly to me and I deal personally with them. Mostly about meals which they didn't like, but the cooks are Arab prisoners who do Arab cooking so this becomes a matter of taste".

We do a tour of the prison. It is built around a large courtyard where in the warm sunshine a group of prisoners is unloading building materials from a lorry. They are mostly in their mid-twenties or thirties, but some are a younger and a few are considerably older. One with a large hammer in his hand waves a cheery hello to the Governor as we approach. Others carry a variety of tools and implements. They make a sharp contrast with the guards who are completely unarmed. The work does not seem to be particularly arduous. Some prisoners are smoking cigarettes and chatting among themselves. One or two are issuing instructions to their comrades who are doing the unloading. Their faces show neither resentment nor fear. They all greet the Governor with the affectionate Arabic equivalent of "Hi there Guv!" or even "Shalom!" There is no sullenness or nervousness.

Bending to avoid striking our heads against a low iron beam (a reminder to be humble and bow while in prison!) we enter the workshops. One of the shifts is at work. Some prisoners are operating the machines which measure and cut the material, others are engaged on the sealing process, a number are folding and packing. The remainder are counting the finished product. Again the striking feature is the absence of fear and resentment. They grin as they greet the Governor.

I watch for a short time and ask the Governor for permission to talk to the men and record their comments on tape. "With pleasure", he says, "go ahead". I have to raise my voice above the noise of the machines. "Who speaks English?" I ask. The men look at each other and I repeat the question. One comes forward and then a second and a third. In a few moments I have a little group around me. I pick one man at random. "What is your name?" I begin. He does not bother to ask the Governor's permission to talk to me. "Mahmoud Abusrami Akub", he replies. "Where do you come from?" "Ramallah". "How long have you been here?" "Six months". "Why are you here?" I gave assistance to the 'liberation' movement. The authorities came to my house and took me away" "Are you well treated in this prison?" "Yes". "Have you any complaints?" "No, they treat me well". "Is the food all right?" "Yes".

I move to another prisoner. "What is your name?" "Makani Sayid Bagdadi" "How long have you been here?" "One and a half years". "What for?" "I am a student". I question him a little closer. "But you don't go to prison for being a student", I insist. "They say I wrote reports to my people". "You are not afraid to talk to me?" "No, there is no problem". This man was found guilty of terrorist activity and is serving a 7-year sentence.

I interviewed about twenty prisoners, including several women. One young woman prisoner of 21 years of age was being held pending investigation of her part in a poisoning attempt. She admitted freely that she had sent poison to some Arabs who were co-operating with the Israeli authorities. "What kind of poison was it?" I asked her. "Cyanide of potassium". "What were you trying to do?" "Kill the traitors". "Did you succeed?" "No". "Are you sorry for doing this?" "Yes".

In the prison hospital I examined one of the patients and discussed his case with prison physician. The place was clean and well-equipped. The patients were comfortable and at ease and talked freely to me. The doctor had a true Hippocratic devotion to his charges and permitted no consideration other than the welfare of the sick to influence his recommendations and decisions. The dentist too was doing a remarkable job. He did not restrict his treatment to extractions. Fillings and other forms of conservation were routine procedures. Again I noted the absence of fear on the part of the prisoners who faced the needle with complete serenity. Anyone who knows the terror which can be excited by the sight of a hypodermic syringe will not fail to appreciate the extent of the prisoners' trust in the Governor and his staff.

Food, which plays a large part in a prisoner's life, seemed to be in abundant supply at Nablus. The store rooms were well-stocked and in the kitchens the prisoners were preparing their Arab-style meals for all the inmates. Each prisoner is allowed 750 grams of bread per day, 70 grams of meat or fish, an egg and white or yellow cheese. Rice, olives, sugar and tea are plentiful and a balanced diet ensures an intake of 3,800 calories a day per prisoner. The only complaints I heard were that

fresh fruit and fresh vegetables were not always available. Incidentally, the food is supplied by the Israeli army.

But of course life is not a bed of roses for the prisoners in Nablus. The prison, which should house a maximum of 450, has 600 inmates. There is therefore a degree of overcrowding in the dormitories. Although they receive daily newspapers in English and Arabic, the facilities available to the younger prisoners to study are inadequate. The Governor explained that they have their text books and are permitted to take correspondence examinations for secondary school, but privacy is lacking for these activities.

I was much impressed by the humanitarian outlook of the Governor and his staff and by their brave efforts at rehabilitation. I left the prison convinced that stories of atrocities against the prisoners are figments of an imagination which has led the Arab masses to a desire to wish away the presence of Israel instead of co-operating with her to the enormous material, moral and spiritual benefit of all the peoples of the Middle East.



GROUP OUTSIDE THE KNESSET, ISRAEL'S PARLIAMENT

ISRAEL — A GREAT DEMOCRACY

By JAMES PATRICK ROCHE

On the last evening I spent in Israel, I heard Mr. Ben-Aharon, the General Secretary of Histadrut say: "We are only in the beginning. We have a long way to go. We want modern technology for man and not man for machines. We want humanism in all our relations".

I was reminded of the speech of John Newton, chairman of the T.U.C., who had voiced similar sentiments, last year.

Before I visited Israel, at the request of Histadrut, I had read a little and discussed a little with friends who had travelled the country. I had the mistaken idea of a country at war, with a war economy, kibbutz that had the kind of discipline that the military have. Perhaps a low standard of living, similar to the one we had in Britain during the Second World War.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

What I saw in Israel was as far from this picture as present day Britain is from our pre-war period.

What I found was a western type democracy inspiring almost the entire population to build a country and a nation with the highest ethical values. From the leaders, I sensed their integrity when discussing their country. Quite frankly probing for any mistakes they may have made, quite honestly admitting shortcomings where they existed, no attempt to "shoot a line". Although on rare occasions I did come across some rank and file who delighted in exaggeration, amongst ordinary people, I found a very high degree of social consciousness. A concern for other people and for other nationalities. Of course there are so many different nationalities who have settled in Israel, having fled from persecution, that it is inevitable that an individual's nationality or colour is a minor matter.

Since I returned I've been asked what has impressed me the most about my visit to Israel? My answer is, "The colossal ignorance that exists about Israel".

Our visit was the most intense educational course I've ever been on. We met the leaders of Histadrut in hour long discussions, similarly with the Israel Labour Party leaders; then again we met and discussed with the committees of three or was it four? kibbutz. We spent an hour with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir, about the same time

with the Foreign Minister, Mr. Abba Eban, end with Mr. Ygal Allon. We travelled from Tel-Aviv to Haifa, to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, Beersheba, Ashkelon. We toured the Golan Heights and crossed the Sea of Galilee, and in all these places we were met by the local mayor or similar dignitary along with T.V. representatives both Hebrew and Arab, and also representatives from Workers' Councils.

A UNIQUE ORGANISATION

Nowhere else in the world is there an organisation like the Israeli's Histadrut.

Formed in 1920 as an all embracing organisation of Jewish workers, it had 4,800 members. Today it has 1,150,000 members representing over 80 per cent of the workers of Israel. There are two religious Trades Unions affiliated to it. There is still a small section of workers organised in Trades Unions that remain outside Histadrut. A worker joins the Histadrut directly and through it becomes a member of one of the 35 Unions catering for his or her occupation. Hence, Histadrut is not a federation but one organisation of all trade unions. Each national trade Union runs its own affairs under its own rules. Major policies are decided by Histadrut. Wages policy is laid down by Histadrut and each trade union gets what it can between a minimum and a maximum. It is a democratically run organisation with elected committees at every level. The basic organisation is the Works Committee.

The local Labour Council is elected by all members in the District. But the individual unions elect their own Council for inner-union decisions.

It has a general Convention whose delegates are elected by the whole membership. This Convention elects a general Council of 120 members, who elect a General Secretary, and a Secretariat of 19 members. All elections are conducted on a proportional basis.

It would take far more space than is available here, to explain the full scale of activities of Histadrut.

Mr. Ben-Aharon, the General Secretary, explained to us some of the ways in which Histadrut cater for its members. It originally organised Labour Exchanges which have now been taken over by the Government. It has a Pension fund for members with assets of a billion dollars. It has a Workers' Sick Fund called Kapat-Holim. This organisation employs 2,500 doctors, 4,700 nurses. Has over 1,000 clinics, 14 hospitals, and extensive ancillary services. Its employees total 15,000. Histadrut would like the State to take over all the schemes that are provided by them, they make an important stipulation, that is, that it should be administered by Histadrut and not Government bureaucrats.

In answer to a question about two strikes that were taking place whilst we were there, Mr. Ben-Aharon told us that the main cause of strikes were bad industrial relations.

AFRO-ASIAN INSTITUTE

It is difficult to realise that a small country like Israel, beset with great problems, yet finds time, personnel, money and resource, to organise an Institute that assists in training and developing peoples from Eastern and Middle East nations, in techniques of development, and to take them more efficiently into their own hands,

Starting this work eleven years ago, the Israelis didn't think they had much to contribute. They had their own problems. But other nations, newly developing, asked them, how Israel was being built with Labour playing an important or decisive part. And a dialogue has developed between them where they learn from students as much as students learn from them. The Israelis know that you cannot transplant a way of life anywhere or by anyone.

There was no preconceived plan for the development of an Institute of Afro-Asian studies. They started off with Ricardo's theory of International Trade. There was a need they tried to fulfill

The Institute teaches that co-operation is a useful tool.

Firstly, they say, manpower is to be put before capital. Capital will be forthcoming if there are capable people, well trained; lack of trained manpower, not lack of capital is responsible for failures.

Secondly, they teach that co-operative ventures are large-scale enterprises, running expenses are lower, they are more economical.

Thirdly, that, in these days modernisation is only possible with co-operation. Eighty-five different countries send students to Israel's Afro-Asian Institute. Two-thirds are Asians and one-third Africans. There is a very high percentage from Japan. I had a discussion with a student from Singapore. The British T.U.C. give four scholarships a year. The Institute does not pay travelling expenses. They think that this is a tool for selection. We met and discussed problems with some of the students. I exchanged addresses with a student from Hong Kong.

Coming away from the Institute, we drove through the town of Bat Yam; 25 years ago it was a desert, now it has a population of 50,000, and is a modern town. Ninety per cent of the houses were built by the Government. Ten per cent are private capital. All the houses in this town had a hot water system based on solar heat. This is an ingenious system which traps the heat from the sun by the use of mirrors and transfers it to a water tank.

In the distance we saw what appeared to be huge lakes, which we later found out were fields of growing crops covered with transparent plastic sheeting and having a similar effect on crops as a green house would.

ISRAEL DEMOCRACY

This was a subject I was uninformed about before my visit. Israel had had a coalition government for 20 years until the recent elections. This changed in the 1969 elections. The Israel Labour Party had two

wings, one of which, Mapam, the left-wing, had a separate policy and organisation; they formed an alignment for the elections and won 62 per cent of the vote. Some eleven different parties fought the election, including three!! Communist Parties. The new Communists polled 2.25 per cent of the total vote. 65 per cent of electorate voted, which compared with previous elections is poor. In the past, voting has been by 75 per cent and even 85 per cent. The Labour Party-Mapam alignment lost some ground in 1969. Their vote will entitle them to send 622 delegates to the 1,001 seat Histadrut Convention, which is a drop of 15 per cent. The Labour Party has 285,000 members of which 85,000 are between 21 and 30 years of age. The entire population of Israel is 2,773,000.

UNIVERSAL CULTURE

Two days after we arrived in Israel, we went by coach to Jerusalem, through the Valley of Sharon and the Valley of Samson, where I picked wild marigolds in full bloom. The guide told me that the name Jerusalem means Town of Peace, and pointing to a little village, he said that was the village of Abu Ghosh, where Mary stopped on her visit to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. All the time I spent in Israel, I continually heard from Israeli born speakers, men and women, statements, that showed a deep knowledge of their own country's history. They say archeology is the national sport. I would say that knowledge of their own history, secular and religious, Old and New Testaments, run it a close second.

At times I was reminded of an article I read in the Sunday Times of January 4th, Abba Eban had said "Israelis place in the Middle East is inseparable from Universal Culture", and that "to put a question mark on Israelis Statehood is to rebel against history and the law of nations". It can be said that Israel came into being by a decision of the law of the United Nations.

It is this decision of the United Nations, agreed upon in November 1947, that the Arab nations refuse to recognise. At the same time they are demanding partial recognition of the Security Council's 1967 resolution.

It appears to me that the Palestinian Arabs have as much a grievance against Jordan and Egypt, as they have against Israel. These two countries annexed a part of the lands that were to be allocated to the Palestinian Arabs.

THE KNESSET

The Israelis are justly proud of their Parliamentary building, the Knesset. With paintings, mosaic floors and wall mural by artists, amongst whom Marc Chagall is prominent. With modern architecture, decor and furnishings, I should think it is far superior to anything

any other country of similar size and wealth could produce. Unlike most of the Middle East nations, Israel is not a military dictatorship. It is a democracy with freedom to organise political parties and campaign for election to the highest office. Opposition is not suppressed any more than it is in Great Britain. We had a meeting with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Golda Meir. After a few questions she spoke to us about refugees.

She said, "Do our friends ask themselves the question, why, of all the refugees the world has seen this last few years, only Arab refugees still remain a problem? After the Second World War there were many refugee problems, Europe has had many and solved them; Pakistan and Korea have had them, but the Jews have been a refugee throughout history—nobody talks about them. The Arab refugees were created by a refusal to accept the UN Resolution of 1947. The day after the resolution was passed, the Arab leaders called upon the Palestinian Arabs to leave Palestine, and when the war was over they would be rid of the 650,000 Jews, and then they could return. The Jewish leaders tried to persuade the Arabs to stay, and those who had gone to return, and at the same time, there were still a quarter of a million Jews in German camps plus fifty thousand in Cyprus".

The Arabs who left Israel territory did so against the will of the Jews. The appeal to stay behind was accepted by about 157,000; since then a number returned and these coupled with natural increases now means that in 1966 there were 313,000 Arabs in Israel benefitting from the increased standard of living and with all civil privileges. But what of Jewish refugees from Arab countries? Israel has absorbed more than half a million Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Had the Arab leaders the same real concern for their people that the Jewish people have, they would have welcomed the Israeli proposal to the UNA in October 1968 which proposed a conference of Middle East and contributing states, together with UN Specialising Agencies to chart a five year plan for the solution of the refugee problem, establish joint refugee integration and rehabilitation commissions on agreed projects.

YAD VASHEM

Only by visiting Israel, seeing the kibbutzim and Histadrut at work, and above all by visiting Yad Vashem, can you just about begin to think what Israel means to a Jew and what it means to be a Jew.

Yad Vashem is the memorial of the Holocaust that murdered almost half of world Jewry. I know of no other people in history who have suffered such a holocaust. A people who have survived such an event, and are still struggling for the right to live, are dominated by man's greatest emotion, self preservation. If they are insisting on direct negotiations, it is because of past experience of Big Power negotiations that has only added one war to another. Many Israeli leaders told us

that they thought that self deception was the besetting sin of the Arab leaders.

Mr. Ygal Allon put it as follows.—

“The Arab leaders must realise once and for all, that they cannot solve the problem by military means. They are undermining their own social position even though they get many things free from Moscow. To keep such a huge army that is doing nothing, is to deprive the people of things they need.”

One last word, amongst the ordinary people, that is people without important positions, kibbutznik, Histadrut members, etc., I met many, many competent people. In a kibbutz called Beth Sera, I spoke to a very wise man who said, “The rising generation always kills something and always builds something”.

ISRAEL, LAND OF FAITH, HOPE AND TENACITY

By J. MARGARET WATSON

To live and work, and make a contribution to the Stream of Culture and life — these three tenets are not only important, they are a basis from which to begin. All three were needed by the thousands of Jewish souls returning to Israel after the end of the Second World War.

Numb from the Ghettos and Concentration Camps of Hitlerism and depleted in numbers by six million, without faith in themselves and the will to survive the State of Israel could not have been reborn, but it was. It continues to thrive under somewhat arduous conditions.

After the War of Independence in 1948, the Jews re-established a comparative handful of people in a corner of the Middle East and called it HOME and named it Israel.

None can say they were given an outright welcome. Neighbouring Arab States, even before the end of the British Mandate, were determined that Israel would be no resting place, and at that time “conned” the resident Arabs into fleeing, thus commencing an unnecessary flow of refugees who to this day dwell in camps and remain a political bargaining pawn. They were promised a return to their village within 24 hours. That was 21 years and three wars ago!

This land, which I first saw in 1953, was poor in the extreme. Desert for thousands of square miles, rock-strewn countryside, sadly lacking in raw materials and every drop of water precious. There were few good roads and little industry. It was mainly agricultural. Not the brightest prospect for immigrants now arriving in large numbers. They were housed in tents and given a share of food and household necessities. Few indeed had any material possessions on arrival, but their skills were soon put to use and housing was top priority.

The scene has greatly changed. 1970 sees Israel winning back the deserts. Large cities have grown up on what were sandy wastes. Industry flourishes. Universities are well established in the larger towns and more are planned. There are splendid Research Centres for technology and agriculture. Hospitals and Polyclinics offer a good Health Service. A network of good roads carries traffic from Dan to Beesheba — and beyond. The children grow. Social Democracy works.

The fourth Study Mission of the Labour Friends of Israel arrived in Tel Aviv on 4th January, 1970, and were invited to tour the country, ask questions, and see conditions there.

Our first meeting was with Mr. I. Ben Aharaon, General Secretary of Histadrut, who gave us a detailed picture of organised labour. Histadrut is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. About 80 per cent, of the working population are members, others are affiliated. Elections for Officers and Committees take place every four years. Not only are salaries, wages and conditions cared for, it offers Social Security, Cultural Activities, Insurance and Pension Schemes and a Sick Fund. "Kupat Holim" the latter departmenting being largely responsible for the Hospitals and Polyclinics. Most births take place in hospital and the parents are given an allowance. These amenities are shared by Jews and Arabs, there is no distinction.

Each town has its own Labour Council, each group airs its views, and as in every democratic country the workers reserve the right to strike — and do. They were asking for a 6 per cent. to 8 per cent. wage rise and this request was being debated. A difficult problem while the burden of defence falls so heavily on the community.

A visit to the Afro-Asian Institute was informative and interesting. Here we saw how, within a permanent framework of seminars and a programme of studies, Israeli teachers and students, together with groups from Africa and Asia, discuss problems of Health, Preventive Medicine, Hygiene and general education. There is a great exchange of technical knowledge, a valuable asset for those from underdeveloped countries. We noted a fair number of students from Japan. Israel is willing to share with all who would learn from her. The Institute is financed by Histadrut and International Scholarships are provided by Trades Unions throughout the World, including the T.U.C.

Our meeting with Ministers of State, including the Prime Minister, were frank and informal. We were welcomed with friendship and cordiality. There were few set speeches from these Heads of State, we were invited to a discussion and the theme was set by us, the visitors.

Mrs. Meir, questioned about the plight of Arab Refugees, asked, "Is this question not one-sided?" Why should the only mention of refugees in the World be of Arab Refugees? What about three million Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia? What about Jewish Refugees? The Arabs are responsible for the permanent camps in Gaza. They have done little to move them, despite much help, while at the same time 300,000 Jewish Refugees arrived, and the miracle of their survival is to be seen here.

Mr. Abba Eban, the Foreign Minister, received our delegation and invited questions. Asked about Soviet support for Nasser, he replied it was part of Soviet expansionist policy in the Middle East. Did he think there was any softening of attitude of countries within the U.N. towards Israel? He thought not. The Communists always line up with Arabs when voting and Israel has but one seat. He could wish for more support from the United Kingdom.

In his opinion the Arabs will continue for a long time to throw bombs in shops, cafes, and at people, and to go on ignoring the cease

fire, but would it change anything? I think not said Mr. Eban, Israel will stay.

The Mayor of Jerusalem, Mr. Teddy Kolek, spoke of conditions in the re-united City. Housing presents a tremendous problem. Planning in itself was frustrating, practically every site is a Holy Place, or is sitting on ancient ruins.

Genuine efforts are being made to integrate the population. Arabs are finding employment in hotels and small factories. Histadrut Officers are trying equally hard to organise Arab workers. Real re-unification, however, comes slowly. Trading becomes disrupted when bomb throwing or grenade planting is discovered and security checks, which unfortunately are so necessary, do not foster good relations.

The Christian Holy Places are on the whole well cared for, but the Arabs seem to have little use for antiquities. The old Jewish Cemetery on the Mount of Olives was in ruins when we saw it, the grave stones having been used to build barracks and about 70 old Synagogues had been destroyed.

Despite the underlying problems, Jerusalem presents a fair sight to the visitors. It is, and will remain, Jerusalem the Golden, whatever our race, creed or colour, or our attitude to the present conflict.

On this visit I saw much to give me hope. Gone was the Mandlebaum Gate, and the grim barriers. Housing estates, Parks and the Jerusalem Peace Forest have taken their place. This City must never be divided again.

We toured the Galil and the Northern Borders. Saw deserted villages on the Golan Heights, noting only one remained occupied by the Druse, approximately 8,000 in number. Evidence of the Six-Day War remains, rusting gun emplacements, deep shelters and battered buildings. In the fertile valley below children in the Kibbutzern sleep well below ground, whilst their parents must protect themselves from snipers and bomb attacks.

Conditions on the West Bank and Gaza are too well known to dwell at length on them. Keeping law and order among peoples in the occupied territories is a difficult task, but settlement of some sort must be reached with local Arabs, even if the wider areas cannot be reached.

We gathered, throughout our talks, an overriding desire for peace. The Jews are weary of insecurity and uncertainty, but they are prepared and determined to fight for their homeland. What of the Arabs? After defeat in three wars a refusal to acknowledge a cease-fire. Would not honour be better served by sitting around a table discussing peace? Friendship and exchange of technical, agricultural and academic know-how are easier to live with than hatred and fear.

Even though the Russians are now rattling sabres the State of Israel will remain. They built the Nation with faith and hope that the World would leave them in peace. Be very sure they have the tenacity to hold what has been hard won. The land is bright and prosperous, the people are willing to share the knowledge they have gained. The poor

Arab farmer could benefit also. It is his right.

Histadrut was generous to our mission. Our thanks have been given elsewhere. May I add mine once more and say how we all valued the opportunities given to us to talk to people and visit old and new territories.

The story of Israel should and will be told. With the rest of my colleagues I look forward to peace.

ISRAEL A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT

by

TOM TORNEY, M.P.

The most lasting impression of my visit to Israel is the tremendous achievement of the people.

The growing of crops where only swamps had existed previously. The building of towns where only desert had been before. I could not help wondering just what their achievement would have been had the Nation been enjoying years of peace, rather than having to be in a continual state of preparedness for War. The tremendous energies and Economic Endeavours at present being used in the War Effort could have been devoted solely to progress within the Community. As good as the achievements of the past, they would look infinitesimal compared to the vast horizons of progress that would be opened up for the people of Israel, indeed for the whole of the Middle East.

One of the highlights of the Tour was undoubtedly the meeting with Mrs. Golda Meir. She is certainly a most dynamic character. Israel is most fortunate to have such a wonderful leader. Questions were varied and very searching, and yet the Prime Minister answered them with an ease that had to be seen to be believed.

Jerusalem is indeed a most fascinating City. My only complaint is that I would have liked more time to explore. There is so much to see, and should I be fortunate enough to return to Israel then I hope I would be able among other things to browse along the Sukhe, in the Arab quarter, slowly traverse the Via Dolorosa and again visit the Western Wall. Above all I would look forward to learning of the progress that has been made to persuading Arab co-operation.

Already it is clear that the Arab peoples are finding that it is much more lucrative to work in the Israeli section of the City

because they are paid the same wage rates as the Israelis, which is far greater than they receive from Arab Employers.

I will never cease to be amazed at the tremendous Military achievement of the six-day war. Here we have a very small Nation fighting against seemingly overwhelming odds, and yet not only did they succeed in defending their Country, but, also inflicted some remarkable defeats upon the great combination of hostile Nations around them.

The evidence is there for all to see. I saw the defence in depth built by the Syrians on the Golan Heights, great concrete embattlements, no doubt built with Soviet advice and materials. From these vantage points people working in the fields below, from the kibbutzim in the valleys, were easy targets for Syrian Marksmen and Shell Fire. Attacks were numerous, and many Israelis paid with their lives for carrying on their peaceful pursuits in the fields in these areas.

The position was intolerable, and the Israeli forces took these vantage points from the Syrians, and pushed them way back.

I challenge anyone to see the situation of the terrain as I have, to see the concrete emplacements, to see the indefensible situation that existed prior to the 6 day war for the unfortunate people working or trying to work in the Kibbutz, to expect Israel to give up the Golan Heights, and again allow a potential enemy to take hostile action with such a tremendous advantage that these heights give.

Any peace settlement must include retention of the control of this area.

The Kibbutz is certainly a major part of the Israeli scene. Here we have community living, with all its problems, and indeed compensations as well. Everyone works, the preparing and eating of food is communal.

The most difficult for me to accept, and possibly most British people would find it so, was the fact of having your own children for only a few hours each day. The wife of course works and does indeed take her full share of running the Kibbutz. Her children are cared for in the Nursery, in the School and they sleep in the children's quarters. The parents have the children to themselves for only a short time at the end of the afternoon. Perhaps I am too sentimental, but, I couldn't accept this, and indeed apparently neither could many British Jews who emigrated to Israel. It was pleasing to see that the authorities are sufficiently flexible to allow change as far as children are concerned in the Kibbutz that we visited that consists almost entirely of British people.

In this British Kibbutz, the living quarters were larger to allow for the children to live with their parents, going away only for Communal care whilst the parents were working, or of course for School. This particular Kibbutz was most impressive, and possessed an air of efficiency.

Tribute is due to the people who live and work in the Kibbutz. They are actually practising the nearest that I have seen anywhere to a Socialist Society. Their own belongings are confined to a very few personal items. Everyone contributes to the Kibbutz according to his strength and ability. Everyone takes from it his basic needs.

You are working for yourself and yet you are working for each other, and decisions are taken democratically. This may not be everyone's life, but, the people I saw seemed to be happy and contented to live in this way, and after all if they didn't like it they were perfectly free to leave and seek work elsewhere. There is of course plenty of work for everyone in Israel.

Having visited a Moshav or Collective Farm, I couldn't help wishing that British Farmers would combine in a similar way. I am sure that it would lead not only to a better output for the Nation, but a better standard of life for the Farmworker as well.

Here in the Moshav, the close knit relationship of an English village seemed to be combined with democratic efficiency that is so typical of Israel.

Farms are still separate units, with their own living accommodation. They possess their own small equipment such as tractors, but the larger machinery is shared. Buying and Marketing is on a communal basis.

Ample facilities are available for normal village cultural and social life as much, if not more so than in the average English village, and certainly without the feudalism that still persists in many an English village.

The Moshav is controlled by the people who live and work in it. Democracy is fully practised with all the people being able to voice opinions and to take part in the election of Moshav Officers.

Finally a word about the "Histradut"—what a vast organisation this seems to be. The simplest description I can give is to say that it is the British Labour Party, T.U.C. and all the Trade Unions within one vast complex plus some elements of our Co-operative Movement as well.

"Histadrut" is doing a magnificent job in Israel, and without it much of the sterling achievement of the Israeli people would have been impossible. Should I have the pleasure of returning to Israel I would like to spend more time studying exactly how the "Histadrut" functions. Watching its deliberations first hand and looking at its administration also.

In conclusion—I wish to give to the Israeli people and indeed to all of us:- Having seen all that has been accomplished both in developing industry and agriculture. The building of towns, and cities, not forgetting the immense cultural progress, made, more difficult by the influx of immigrants of different races, who had to be integrated into the Community, even the language was difficult, in fact the only thing in common was the Jewish faith.

Having looked, listened and questioned them my sincere wish is that PEACE must be brought to the whole of the Middle East. With the tremendous "know how" and energies of the Jew coupled with the countless numbers of the Arab—together—the progress that opens up for all the peoples of the Middle East is formidable. PEACE THEREFORE IS THE PRIORITY — ALL OF US, JEW, ARAB, GENTILE MUST HELP TO THIS END . . .

SHALOM'

NOTHING SHORT OF PEACE WILL DO

by

TED LEADBITTER, M.P.

Anyone following Middle Eastern affairs must wonder how it is that one of the most interesting places on earth remains so unsettled, divided and explosive.

Much blood has been spilt in the cradle of the civilised world. More will be spilt unless the great powers come to their senses. America, Russia, Great Britain and France are not without guilt. I have come to the conclusion their hands are not clean. They have pursued policies of self interest and expediency. These have been a perpetual mix in their meddling.

These countries have played off each other for short term questionable advantages. They have been inconsistent and downright opportunist. When it has suited their purposes they have stood aside. Arab and Israel alike have reason to distrust them, their word, their combined assurances, or even the postures of the United Nations.

The Russian intrusion is formidable and dangerous. The extent of it is partially found in the Egyptian mistrust of America, the changing role of Britain and the floundering of so called friends of the western world.

The Middle East question has been crystalised in the form of the Israel-Arab conflict and history books have been turned inside out to justify one cause or the other. There is a mass of information, but not to match the mountain of mistakes, prejudices, changing policies and attitudes beyond the Middle East which have succeeded in satisfying, and in turn inflaming, the people in that part of the world.

Border guarantees by America have been broken. International assurances have counted for nothing, and the Security

Council of the United Nations has ignored many complaints brought to it.

Peace cannot be certain as long as the big power games and its conflicting purposes and stupidity persists.

We can all go back in history for lessons to suit our purposes, but we cannot turn our backs on reality and the present.

The fact is Israel exists and has a right to ask for the conditions of peace, agreement for the security of borders she is willing to negotiate, access to the sea and trading relationships which are the normal expectancies of any other nation. Recriminations and diplomatic exercises are material for the dustbin or at best small talk for statesmen over cocktails compared with the task of facing the truth of the moment.

Whatever the nature of the argument no-one in his right sense can support the notion that Israel shall not exist. That is not acceptable, and if it is not, then responsible nations should see to it that Israel is not asked to withdraw from occupied territories without the conditions of peace drawn up by treaty by the nation states concerned.

If the great powers cannot stomach this; if the considerations of risking political influence outweigh the claims of what is right, then they cannot be unhappy if they are charged with hypocrisy in expecting a small country to do what they have not practised themselves.

The fact is a war took place. Territory was occupied, and no country in such circumstances can be expected to give up its new borders without a negotiated peace. True the Egyptians have said that Israel cannot have peace while she occupies Arab land, but it is also true that peace has not been guaranteed if Israel withdraws from that land. The pre-1967 borders and conditions caused the mobilisation of Arab forces and eventually the breach of the American guarantee of 1957. A return to them is no settlement for the Middle East or removal of the fear of another threat in Israel.

If peace is really wanted in the Middle East; if the conditions for the promotion of prosperity in the Arab lands and the removal of poverty are to be established then Israel and the Arab countries have to come to terms with each other. Co-existence, and the acceptance of it will serve the Middle East the better rather than any extremist view directed towards the non-existence of Israel.

The great powers can lend a hand by encouraging both sides to get round the table and bringing an end to the long suffering meanderings of Dr. Jarring.

But no-one must underestimate the present danger. Nor when I make the point must Arab politicians assume I make a case against them or that I am not concerned about their people. For the fact is the danger in my view is not only a threat to Israel but a menace to the future prosperity to the Arabs.

Russian influence and the three billion dollar's worth of armament it has invested in Egypt cannot be purely for the love of Egyptians. Some other motive produces that sort of exercise. Bigger game is involved. Egypt and Israel are pawns in the game. The one is convenient to have, the other is in the way. The one can be played off against the other while a shrewd eye is coverting the Arabian Peninsula and the oil producing lands in the Persian Gulf. Not that Russia wants oil, but the control of the area would be an immense political advantage and one which Central Europe and Japan in particular might be concerned about.

Is a conflict stirred up between the Arab and Israeli likely to be a necessary part of this objective? If there is substance in this then I suggest cutting each others throats for some one else is a damned fools game.

The build up of Russian power and armaments is disturbing. Russia does not necessarily want a conflict, but it is providing a detonator in the Middle East which can set off a trail of explosions feeding on the powder of Israel-Arab tensions and misunderstandings.

No other country in the world is surrounded by the danger threatening Israel. I repeat we can search for arguments supporting Arab and Israel alike, but Israel exists and so does the danger. The present frontiers are short, some 600 miles compared with 900 miles before 1967. Even so, in spite of the danger Israel seeks to negotiate these frontiers for a firm foundation of peace. I would have thought a confrontation between the Arabs and the Israelis to find a settlement here will serve them better in the future. Both should be spared the agony of a boiling pot stirred up by Russia or any other power for that matter.

Perhaps the Arabs can concede that if Israel is prepared to give up her present more easily managed frontiers for a firm peace settlement then Israel cannot be accused before the nations of the world of seeking military glory. Perhaps it can be further conceded that when it was possible for Israel to march on and take Amman and Cairo in 1967, she did not, then that action showed Israel was wanting nothing more than security and that possession of other lands was not an objective of victory. The evidence is there to support the claim that the Arabs and Israelis

have common causes to negotiate a settlement and confound the powers which have sought to feed on their weaknesses and their troubles — and will seek to do so again given half the chance.

Recently I returned from Israel. I was there before the 6 days war. I also visited Jerusalem one or two days before that war from the Jordanian side. I am profoundly convinced that only the Israelis and the Arabs are fitted to solve their problems, that any settlement that makes sense can only come from them, and that any refusal by them to meet plays into the hands of people who are not necessarily their friends.

But I am also convinced that until there is agreement in the reduction of arms it would be wrong to leave Israel without the means whereby she can adequately defend herself. It is all right for the great nations to stand aside, as they did in the 6 days war, enjoying the luxury of pontificating afterwards whatever the outcome, and the easing of conscience with appraisals of a little nation that saved its life — as it turned out. But the element of surprise may not work again. Small nations have been vanquished before.

Therefore, if Israel is to be treated as a full member of the United Nations, as it is, then its life must not be put at risk for the want of the means to defend itself. The United Nations has no automatic power to defend member nations. But membership does involve acceptance of the Charter of Human Rights and I hope an understanding that in the end the United Nations will count for nothing and will die an ignominious death if its participating members will allow one of them to go to the wall because they lack the guts to forestall the ambitions of any one or combination of them.

Israel is the only Jewish State in the world. It draws its small population from all quarters of the earth. It is a unique state gathering together a wide variety of cultures and languages and harmonising them with the needs of living, the requirements of a common national purpose and a common tongue. Its roots were in the land long before Balfour and its survival has been earned.

More than 300,000 Arabs have lived peacefully in Israel since 1948 and although this proves little against the general situation or the magnitude of it, nevertheless, they are there, enjoying the conditions of work membership of the Histadut brings, the rights to vote and be elected, and standards of life more hopeful than can be offered in many parts of the Middle East.

This country has cultivated the earth where for decades it was barren. It has built new roads, improved communications, thrown

up new towns, and blended the ancient with the modern enhancing its appeal and attraction.

Schools, hospitals and social services have enlarged the social wage of its people, and its democratic institutions are blending a form of socialism which is the envy of political reformers in the western world.

There is of course still much to be done but it is not for us to make judgements from the limited knowledge of our own back garden. Sufficient it is to recognise that a near miracle has been achieved against a background of strife and bitterness. The result is the creation of a nation that contributes its share to the variety of human possibilities

It has supplied aid to more than fifty countries without any conditions attached, and has established the cultural and educational foundations which are essential to its standing, contributions to world affairs and the totality of human knowledge.

Such a nation cannot be banished from the face of the earth. The world cannot afford to turn the clock back or to allow a projection of centuries of blood letting. Israel exists. Its people live. Negotiation, not guns or missiles, is needed to bring her the peace she cries for, and for that matter the peace that Arab countries require for their own prosperity.

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